The Century Bible

Illustrated

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THE CENTURY BIBLE

A MODERN COMMENTARY

EDITED BY

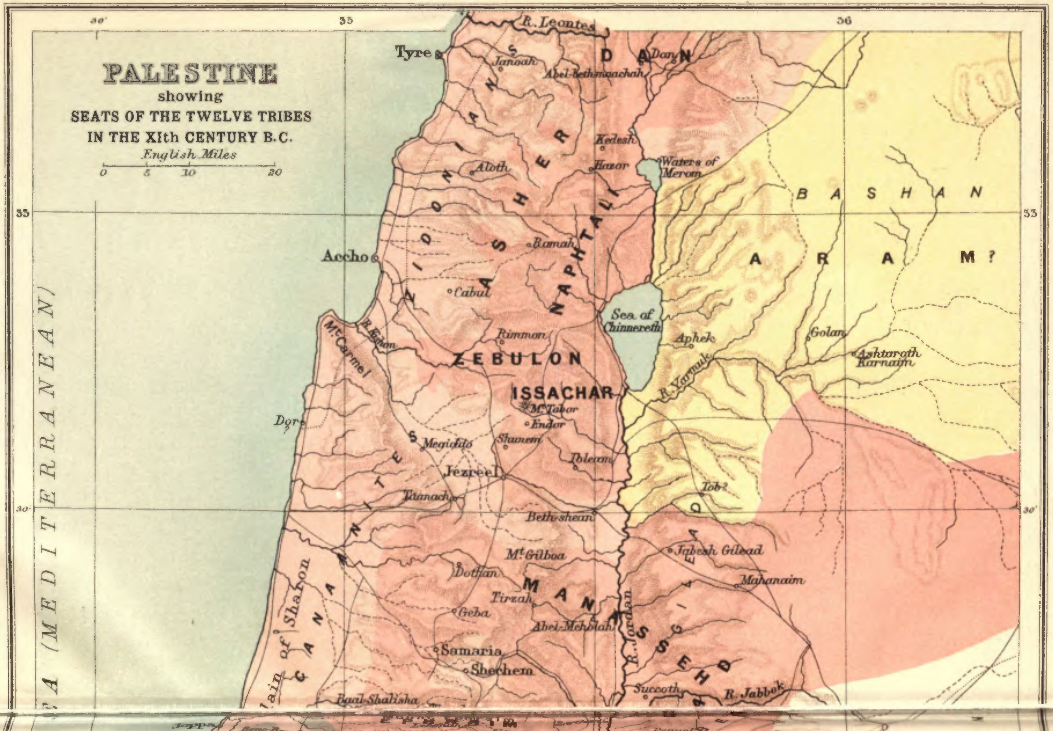
PRINCIPAL W. F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D.

JUDGES AND RUTH

EDITED BY

REV. G. W. THATCHER, M.A., B.D.

OXFORD
HORACE HART, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY



PALESTINE
showing
SEATS OF THE TWELVE TRIBES
IN THE XIth CENTURY B.C.

English Miles
0
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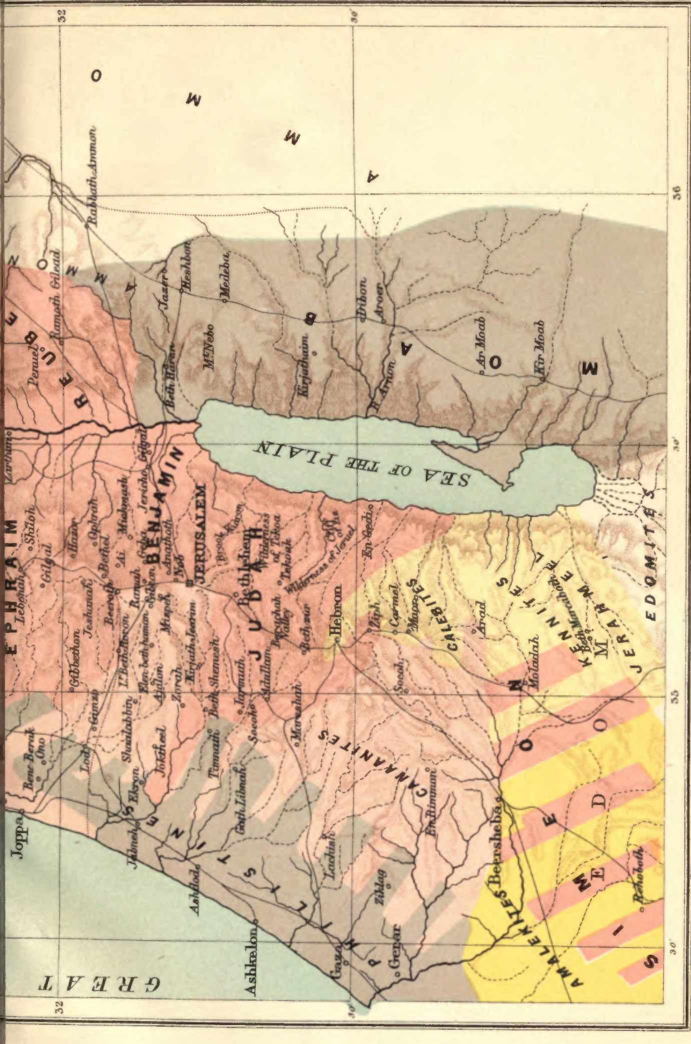
30'
35
36
33
30'
R. Leontes
Tyre
Janoah
DAN
Dan
Abel-Bethmaachah
ASHER
ZIDONIANS
Kedesh
Hazor
Aloth
Waters of Merom
NAPHTALI
BASHAN
ARAM?
Ramah
Accho
Cabul
(MEDITERRANEAN)
SEA
Sea of Chinnereth
Aphek
Golan
Ashtaroth Karnaim
Mt. Carmel
R. Kishon
Rimmon
ZEBULON
ISSACHAR
R. Yarmuk
Mt. Tabor
Endor
Dor
Megiddo
Shunem
Ibleam
Jezreel
Taanach
Tob?
CANAANITES
Beth-shean
Jabesh Gilead
GAD
Mt. Gilboa
Dothan
Mahanaim
MANASSEH
Tirzah
Geba
Abel-Meholah
R. Jordan
Plain of Sharon
Samaria
Shechem
Succoth
R. Jabbok
Baal-Shalisha
Joppa
EPHRAIM


GREAT
SEA OF THE PLAIN
EPHRAIM
BENJAMIN
JUDAH
REUBEN
MOAB
AMMON
EDOM
PHILISTINES
CANAANITES
CALEBITES
KENITES
JERAHMEELITES
EDOMITES
AMALEKITES
SIMEON
JERUSALEM
Joppa
Ashkelon
Gaza
Gerar
Ashdod
Jabneh
Ekron
Gath
Libnah
Lachish
Ziklag
Beersheba
Rehoboth
En Rimmon
Moladah
Beth Marcaboth
Arad
Hebron
Ziph
Carmel
Maon
Socoh
Mareshah
Adullam
Jarmuth
Beth Shemesh
Timnath
Zorah
Kirjath Jearim
Beth-zur
Bethlehem
Tekoah
Wilderness of Tekoa
Wilderness of Jeruel
Cliff of Ziz
En Gedi
Brook Kidron
Nob
Anathoth
Mizpeh
Gibeon
Ramah
Geba
Michmash
Ai
Bethel
Beeroth
Jeshanah
Gibbethon
Gimzo
Lod
Ono
Bene Berak
Shaalabbin
Jokneel
Ajalon
Neb beth-horon
L. Beth Horon
Valley of Berachah
Hazor
Ophrah
Gilgal
Jericho
Shiloh
Lebonah
Zarthan
Penuel
Ramoth Gilead
Rabbath Ammon
Jazer
Heshbon
Medeba
Mt. Nebo
Beth Haran
Kirjathaim
Dibon
Aroer
R. Arnon
Ar Moab
Kir Moab
32
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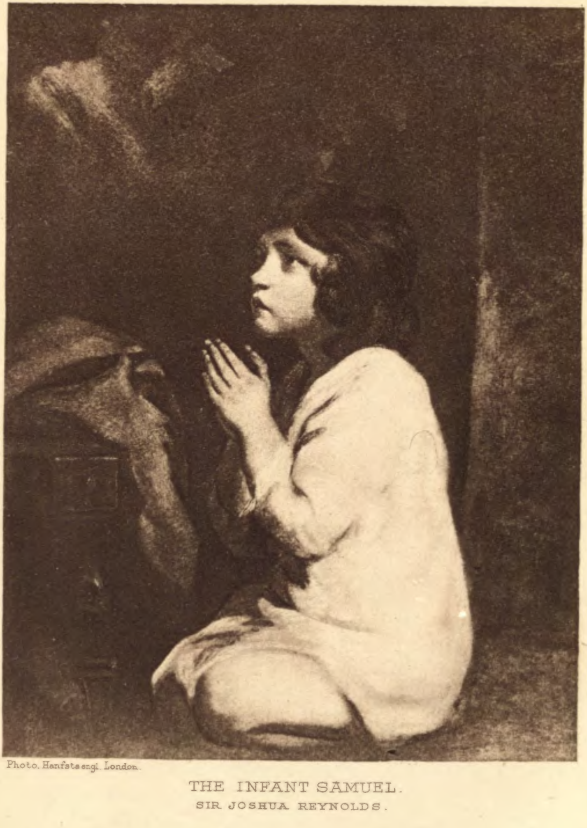

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THE INFANT SAMUEL.
SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

The Century Bible
A MODERN COMMENTARY

Judges and Ruth

INTRODUCTION; REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES, GIVING AN ANALYSIS SHOWING FROM WHICH OF THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS EACH PORTION OF THE TEXT IS TAKEN; INDEX AND MAP ILLUSTRATIONS

EDITED BY THE

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MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

LONDON
THE CAXTON PUBLISHING COMPANY
CLUN HOUSE, SURREY STREET, W.C.

APR 29 1969

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE object of this commentary is not to evolve historical or religious teaching from the books treated. That should be the final object of every thoughtful reader. The special work of the editor is to show what material is available for such a purpose, how it arose and how it has fared in the course of its transmission. For those who would study these things more in detail, this little book may serve as an introduction to the fuller works cited under *Literature*.

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MAP

PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF THE JUDGES . . *Facing Title*

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

INTRODUCTION

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE OF THE BOOK IN THE CANON.

THE Hebrew Bible, of which our O. T. is a translation, is known among Jews as 'The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.' The three titles correspond with three divisions of the O. T. writings, and indicate three stages in the formation of the Canon. 'The Law,' comprising Genesis to Deuteronomy, formed the first Hebrew Bible, and was received as such about the end of the fifth century B.C. To this was added, not later than 200 B.C., the collection called 'the Prophets,' composed of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings in the first half, and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor Prophets in the second part. The third Canon, called 'the Writings,' was practically closed at the time of Christ, though the fitness of some books to be in it was matter of dispute until near the end of the first century A.D. In it were contained the Psalms (the Jewish hymn-book), the two Wisdom books, Proverbs, and Job, a collection of five small works (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther) recited in the synagogues on certain special days, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, the great Church History of the Jews. The first half of the second Canon thus contained the history of the Hebrews from the death of Moses to the Exile, and the Book of Judges was put into this Canon to fill up the gap from the death of Joshua to the birth of Samuel. Was the book written for this purpose and at this time, or was it already in existence? Like the other historical books of the O. T. it is anonymous. Little or no regard was paid to authorship in those days. Nor is the date of its composition given in the work itself. It is only by a careful examination of the contents, structure, language, and modes of expression that we can hope to gain some idea of the origin and history of the book which was thus received into the Canon.

CONTENTS.

The Book of Judges in its present form claims to present the history of Israel from the time when the tribes went up from the Jordan valley to take possession of the districts which had fallen to their lot to conquer, up to the days of Samuel, in whose time the monarchy came into existence. The Israelites are represented as a nation existing alternately in a state of anarchy and idolatry, and under the rule of distinguished 'judges' or heroes, of whom thirteen are mentioned.

In chapters i. 1–ii. 5 is a Preface containing a valuable but fragmentary and incomplete account of the first attempts of the Hebrew tribes to conquer Palestine, and the result of these attempts, chiefly in the way of failure. Chapters ii. 6–xvi contain the stories of the Judges, and include a scheme of chronology evidently intended to fill up the period from Joshua to Samuel. The deeds whereby the heroes won their position as judges of Israel are recorded as to Othniel in iii. 7–11, Ehud in iii. 12–30, Barak (with Deborah) in iv. 1–v. 31, Gideon in vi. 1–viii. 32, Abimelech in viii. 33–ix. 57, Jephthah in x. 6–xii. 7, Samson in xiii. 1–xvi. 31. Beside these men are mentioned Shamgar, who slew six hundred Philistines (iii. 31), and five others—Tola (x. 1, 2), Jair (x. 3–5), Ibzan (xii. 8–10), Elon (xii. 11, 12), and Abdon (xii. 13–15)—of whom we are told only their places of burial and their social distinction. The stories of the Judges come to an end with chapter xvi. In the remaining part of the book we have two stories of events which are said to have happened in the times of the Judges. In chapters xvii, xviii is contained the history of the origin of a famous image which was in the northern sanctuary of Dan; how Micah the Ephraimite made it, and how it was stolen from him by a party of Danites who were migrating from the south; how finally it was set up in their new northern settlement and remained there 'until the captivity of the land.'

In chapters xix–xxi is recorded the story of a ghastly deed of Benjamin, of the fierce war made by the other Hebrews against that tribe, and of the means adopted to prevent the total extinction of the tribe.

THE STORIES OF JUDGES. ii. 6–xvi. 31.

This work consists of an Introduction (ii. 6–iii. 6), which first unites the work to the Book of Joshua (ii. 6–10), and then explains the author's view of the history of the Hebrews during the period to be treated (ii. 11–iii. 6). After this follow the stories of the Judges (iii. 7–xvi. 31).

Of the four connecting verses, three, viz. 6, 8 and 9, are from the older tradition, while verse 7 is from the Deuteronomic editor (see below). Verses 7 and 8 are found also in Joshua xxiv. 29–31.

(*a*) *The Introduction.* The section ii. 11–iii. 6 is the key to the purpose of the editor in compiling his work. Here he lays down in general terms the scheme of the history he is about to tell in detail afterwards. The 'children of Israel'—conceived of as one people—were ungrateful and forsook Yahweh, who had brought them up out of Egypt, and served the local gods of Palestine. Yahweh was angry and 'sold them' into the hands of their enemies, so that they were sore distressed. Then (after repentance of the people in the stories) Yahweh raised up heroes ('judges'), who delivered them from their enemies. While the judges lived the people served Yahweh, but when they died the people again turned away to the local gods, and the same story of oppression, deliverance, piety, idolatry was enacted again. In consequence of this faithlessness Yahweh determined not to allow the annihilation of the Canaanites, but suffered some of them to remain that the faithfulness of the Israelites might be put to the test.

(*b*) *The Editor's Formulae.* What the editor says in this Introduction he states again and again in the course of the work. In the story of Othniel (iii. 7–11) there is nothing but this formula and the names of Othniel and Cushan-rishathaim. The story of Ehud begins with the evil of the Israelites, the oppression, the raising up of a deliverer (iii. 12–15), and closes with the summary of their deliverance and rest (verses 29, 30). In the story of Barak the same is found in iv. 1–3, 23, 24, v. 31^{c}; in the story of Gideon in vi. 1–6, viii. 28; in the story of Jephthah in a longer form in x. 6–18; and in the story of Samson more briefly in xiii. 1, xv. 20.

(*c*) *Standpoint of Introduction and Formulae.* In the absence of any information as to the date at which the book was edited, it is of great importance to examine the chief features of these passages in which the editor's standpoint is so clearly marked.

(1) In all these passages 'the children of Israel,' or Israelites, are spoken of as one people, acting together, suffering together, repenting together, ruled over as a whole by each judge in turn. This fact at once shows that the editor wrote after the union of the tribes into a people, after the establishment of the monarchy. Up to that time, as we learn from the stories in the Book of Judges and from the earlier part of the first Book of Samuel, the Hebrew tribes had no such sense of unity. Each tribe made its own way in the conquest of Palestine (see Judges i). The different tribes too were so surrounded by hostile cities and peoples that intercourse was difficult and often impossible. Occasionally, only, two or three tribes were able to form a temporary alliance against a common enemy. The feeling between the tribes was by no means always one of friendship. The Ephraimites on two occasions (Judges viii. 1 ff., xii. 1 ff.) showed an un-

friendliness of disposition, which in the latter case led to inter-tribal war. The Benjamites too were once almost annihilated, not by Canaanites, but by other Hebrews. Even the song in Judges v shows that it was at that time impossible to unite all the tribes and weld them into one people. It was only at a later time, when their conquest of Palestine was more complete, and they had realized that their common worship of Yahweh was a strong bond of union, that the *Hebrew tribes* became the *Children of Israel*. The writer of this Introduction and the corresponding passages wrote after this union had been accomplished.

(2) While the stories of the Judges *record* the history of the times in which they lived, the author of these passages *interprets* that history. However interesting the accounts of the Judges may be in themselves for the student of ancient traditions or folklore, for the editor they have interest only as illustrations of the fact that Yahweh has led His people by a constant discipline to the better understanding of Himself and His requirements.

(*d*) *Date of Introduction and Formulae*. But this is exactly the doctrine that was first proclaimed by the prophets of Israel (especially Hosea) in the eighth century, and by their successors the prophets of Judah in the seventh century B.C. The great and new message of Hosea (i–iii) to the people of his own time was that they were like a faithless wife leaving her husband to follow her lovers, as they deserted Yahweh to serve the local gods; but that Yahweh would not give them up; He would bring them back, and by discipline fit them to be again what they were chosen to be in His service. What Hosea thus announces of Yahweh's dealing with His people *in the present and future* is taken up and applied in the Book of Deuteronomy to His dealing with the people in the past. The Book of Deuteronomy, published in 621 B.C., is primarily a law-book (xii-xxvi) giving precepts by which the teaching of the prophets may be carried out in everyday life. But the historical introductions in chapters i-xi contain the application of Hosea's teaching to the past history of the people. This new interpretation of history appealed powerfully to the religious teachers of Israel. The traditions and chronicles of the past were searched to find illustrations of Yahweh's dealings with Israel, and such historic works as were in existence were edited anew in the light of this belief. All the historical books of the Hebrews that have come down to us in the second Canon of the O. T. show that they have undergone this Deuteronomistic editing. These books thus consist of two parts, (*a*) the *material*, (*b*) the Deuteronomistic *interpretation*; the two being sometimes closely interwoven, sometimes, as in the Book of Judges (ii. 6-xvi. 31), standing side by side, but separate. The ideas of Deuteronomy are found here in the Introduction (ii. 6-iii. 6) and the formulae attached to some of the stories (see above), and *not* in the other parts of the book. From the above considerations we can therefore infer that the Book of Judges (ii. 6-xvi. 31) was written some time after the proclamation of Deuteronomy in 621; how long after it is impossible to say.

(*e*) *The Stories of the Judges.* But was the whole work written at this time? Evidently not. The stories of the Judges differ in many respects from the framework in which they are set. The language of some (as in the song of chapter v) is of much older date than the seventh century. The method of presenting facts is also quite different. Some of these facts too contradict the statements of the Introduction. The Deuteronomistic editor implies (ii. 18-19) that the Israelites served Yahweh during the lifetime of the Judges, yet we find Gideon making an image (viii. 27), a form of Yahweh-worship common enough in his day, but pure idolatry in the eyes of a Deuteronomist. Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter would be an abomination to the editor, and it is clear that he did not write the account of it, but found it already written. There is still, however, a choice of two possibilities as to the source of the materials the editor used. Did he find a written record of these stories at hand? Or did he collect the traditions which had been handed down (as in many other countries) by word of mouth from generation to generation? The former is certainly the more probable view. Had the editor gathered oral traditions himself, he would scarcely have taken some of the stories which do not illustrate his own view of past history (parts of Gideon and Jephthah stories as above). The style and language of the stories is quite distinct from that of the editor, a thing which would scarcely happen if he had been the first to put them in literary form.

The pre-Deuteronomic Book of Judges. One may speak then with some degree of certainty of a *pre-Deuteronomic Book of Judges*, the date of which we cannot tell, except that it must have been written some time before 621 B.C. This book probably contained the stories of Ehud, Barak (with Deborah), Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah, Samson, and the material of chapters xvii.-xxi. (See below, 'Supplement.')

What then was the source or what were the sources of this book? Had the author a document or documents before him, or did *he* gather traditions? One thing is clear—that the author had more than one account of the same events in some cases. Of Barak's deliverance in the battle of Esdraelon there is a prose story in chapter iv and a poetical in chapter v. The two have been put side by side with a few connecting words, although they differ in their representation of the facts. In the story of Gideon there seem to be two different accounts of his deeds, as viii. 4-21 certainly does not appear to be a continuation of chapter vii. Many suppose that there were two collections of traditions from which the pre-Deuteronomic book was compiled. Attempts have been made to show that these two books were parts of the great writings J and E which contribute so much to the material of the Pentateuch and Joshua. It is indeed very possible that these works were histories beginning with Creation and extending at least to the establishment of the monarchy, but it is impossible to be certain of this, or in any case to say to which of the two works a given story belongs.

The Traditions of Judges. The final source of our book was certainly tradition. Of the thirteen men mentioned in the Book of Judges we have detailed tradition of six only, namely of Ehud, Barak, Gideon and his son Abimelech, Jephthah, and Samson.

Ehud. The story of Ehud is one which in form and material points to its being an old and authentic tradition, such as might well have been told with pride among the men of Benjamin. The inconsistence of chapter iii. 19 and 20 may show that the tradition existed in more than one form as regards details. Such variation in details is common in oral traditions, and, where it exists, both accounts are often put by Hebrew writers side by side without remark.

Barak. Of the Hebrew victory over the Canaanite kings we have two traditions, which, though differing in some important features (see commentary to chapter v.), evidently refer to the same event. The poetical account in chapter v. is one of the most vivid pieces of writing in the O. T., and seems to have been written by one who had taken part in the movement. Such poetic stories are often among the earliest literary productions of a people. Before 800 B. C. there were collections in writing of such poetry (2 Sam. i. 18, Num. xxi. 14). As is very common in such collections, the authorship of the poems is often unknown, or at any rate not mentioned. As will be seen from the commentary, the text, partly in consequence of its antiquity, is very difficult to explain in many places, but the general course of events is clear. It is pre-eminently a battle-song of triumph. Barak and Deborah are twice addressed in it, but the poem was composed not to glorify them, but to celebrate the triumph over the enemy. It is, however, because of its association with the 'judge' Barak that it is put into the Book of Judges. The prose story in chapter iv is evidently regarded by the Deuteronomic editor as the more important for his purpose. His own formula precedes (iv. 1–3) and follows (iv. 23, 24) the prose story, and only the closing section of it, 'and the land had rest forty years,' is reserved for the end of the song. Yet it is almost certain that the poem contains the truer account. Prose traditions were always liable to additions and alterations in the mouths of the people, while it was more difficult to alter poetry without disturbing the rhythm of the whole. In chapter iv. the story of Sisera's battle against the kings of Canaan seems to have been blended with a story (recorded in Joshua xi. 1–9) of a war with Jabin, king of Hazor, hence the discrepancies between this account and the song.

Gideon and Abimelech. The stories of Gideon and his house are more numerous than those of any other judge. He was evidently a man of great influence in Central Palestine. His own personal character is more clearly delineated than that of any other hero (except Samson, whose life is of quite another character). Above even his simple straightforwardness and his courage stands his religious nature. He receives his call to deliver his tribe from Yahweh's angel. One of his earliest deeds is the destruction of the Baal's altar, after he has erected one to Yahweh. Four traditions are recorded as to his intercourse with Yahweh and desire to know His will (vi. 36ff., vii. 2f., 4ff., 9ff.); and when he had crushed the Midianites he devoted his share of the spoil to making an ephod by which Yahweh might be consulted. The traditions here, as in other cases, were doubtless collected from different quarters. Some of them were told of Jerubbaal, so that the collector in vii. 1 feels it necessary to explain in one of these which he is using that Jerubbaal is Gideon. There are two distinct sets of traditions in chapters vii, viii, the one telling how he led the Hebrews against the Midianites under Oreb and Zeeb, how he conquered them and saved his people. The other (viii. 4 ff.) tells how he and the men of his family (Abiezer) pursued Zebah and Zalmunna to exact blood revenge, because they had killed his brothers.

Although in the story of viii. 22 Gideon is said to have declined to rule over his people, it is evident from the story of Abimelech that he had exercised a recognized authority, and of such a character that his family might be expected to continue it after him. The Deuteronomic editor did not recognize Abimelech as a judge, and has not enclosed his story in his own usual framework (see p. 6). But the traditions here evidently come from the same sources as those of the other judges, and show the same blending of various stories (see commentary to chapter ix).

Jephthah. This story, like that of Gideon, presents a man of striking personality. Like Gideon he is a man of strong religious earnestness. He even sacrifices his only daughter rather than break his promise to Yahweh. He is, however, of a fiercer disposition than Gideon. The Ephraimites, who had made Gideon speak flattering words to them when they threatened him (viii. 1 ff.), brought destruction on themselves when they found fault with Jephthah (xii. 1 ff.). The stories current about Jephthah have been increased by the addition of a long section (xi. 12–28) made up from Num. xx, xxi. This is very awkwardly introduced here, for it breaks the connexion between verses 12 and 30, and as a matter of fact refers to Moab, while Jephthah's enemy was Ammon. This section must have been introduced from the other work, when the traditions were first written down, or when the pre-Deuteronomic book was composed.

Samson. The traditions of Samson, said to be a Danite, differ altogether from those of the other Hebrew heroes. The Deuteronomic editor seems to have felt this, as his formulae (xiii. 1, xv. 20) shrink to the smallest dimensions. He is throughout a reckless strong man, whose adventures are partly due to sudden frenzies, partly to a deliberate desire to avenge himself for what he considers to be ill treatment of himself. He is a wilder Hereward the Wake, a berserker, or very like the Russian bogatirs. Such characters are to be found in the folklore of most countries. That his deeds are said to be generally due to the spirit of Yahweh rushing upon him is quite in accord with the beliefs of early peoples, who ascribed all extraordinary manifestations of power to the deity. (Extraordinary natural features are often ascribed among ourselves by the people to the devil—'the devil's bridge,' &c.). Judged by modern standards Samson was most immoral, but moral standards are not usually applied to folk-stories. These stories must have been in the mouths of the people, and been favourites with them, long before they were reduced to writing, and Samson was raised to the dignity of a judge in Israel. One is tempted by the name of the hero to believe that they were Canaanitish in origin, and taken over and adapted by the Hebrews. One can hardly imagine a Hebrew mother, a worshipper of Yahweh, giving a name like Samson (probably 'Sun's man'), connected with the worship of the Sun, to her child. (The city 'Beth-shemesh,' 'Abode of the Sun,' was close to his birthplace.) Some have attempted to resolve the whole story into a sun-myth, but without success. Although all the stories were probably in the pre-Deuteronomic Book of Judges, the Deuteronomic editor put his closing formula at the end of chapter xv. It was no part of his plan to tell the painful story of his end. Chapter xvi has, however, been later restored from the earlier book, and the ending repeated in a shorter form in xvi. 31.

(*f*) *The Minor Judges.* There are five judges mentioned in our book of whom nothing is told save that they judged Israel for a term of years, were wealthy and influential men, and that their burial-places are known (see p. 4). There is also one, Shamgar, who smote the Philistines and saved Israel. As there are no traditions concerning the first five, it is evident that they have been introduced to suit some scheme of the author. It is probable that they were thus introduced to make the number of judges correspond with that of the tribes of Israel, while at the same time their chronology was required by the author. The names, and possibly the information as to their social position, may have been derived from the graves themselves, or from local tradition regarding these burying-places. The mention of Shamgar (iii. 31) differs from that of the five minor judges, in so far as there is no chronology, no burying-place given, and iv. 1 connects with iii. 30, ignoring Shamgar. (See also commentary to this verse.) It is very probable that a late author did not count Abimelech as a judge, and inserted Shamgar to make up the number of judges to twelve.

(*g*) *The Chronology.* The Deuteronomic Book of Judges contains a system of chronology which is evidently intended to fill up the interval between Joshua and Samuel. The figures given are 8 years (iii. 8), 40 (iii. 11), 18 (iii. 14), 80 (iii. 30), 20 (iv. 2), 40 (v. 31), 7 (vi. 1), 40 (viii. 28), 3 (ix. 22), 23 (x. 2), 22 (x. 3), 18 (x. 8), 6 (xii. 7), 7 (xii. 9), 10 (xii. 11), 8 (xii. 14), 40 (xiii. 1), 20 (xv. 20), or a total of 410 years. (If the story of Abimelech was not contained in the Deuteronomic book the three years of ix. 22 must be subtracted.) It has, however, been pointed out that in 1 Kings vi. 1, 480 years are said to have elapsed from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon's reign, whereas if to the 410 years of Judges be added the forty years of the wandering in the desert, the seven years (approximately) occupied in the conquest of Palestine according to the Book of Joshua, twenty years of Samuel's rule (1 Sam. vii. 2), probably twenty years of Saul's reign, forty of David's, and the first four of Solomon's, we should have a total of 541 years for the period mentioned in 1 Kings vi. 1. But it is useless to attempt to reconcile these data, for it is clear that many of them are in round numbers only. Forty years was a general expression for a generation. This number occurs four times in Judges, twenty—or half this number—twice, and eighty—or twice this number—once. The passage in Kings is twelve times forty, or twelve generations. Whether the more exact numbers come from tradition it is impossible to tell. In any case the chronology is artificial, for the Judges did not rule over all Israel, nor is there any evidence that they really succeeded one another in order.

The Preface. i. 1–ii. 5.

This section was evidently not a part of the Deuteronomistic Book of Judges. That work, as we have seen, begins in ii. 6 with recalling the events of Joshua xxiv., and then proceeds with the history from that time. But this section contains a summary of events from the time when the Hebrews first went up from Gilgal (see i. 1) to conquer Palestine. It must therefore have been prefaced to the Deuteronomic book at a later time, but before the work was introduced into the Canon. Its incompleteness indicates that it is an extract from a larger work. This work has also been used by the compiler of Joshua, for in that book are many passages contained in this section (see commentary), and several other extracts apparently belonging to the same work, but not used here. These passages are generally ascribed to the historical work called J. (See commentary on Joshua.) The historical references to the subjugation of the Canaanites in verses 28 and 33 point to the time of David or Solomon as the earliest date for the composition of the section. Its historical value has always been estimated highly. The recognition that the conquest of Palestine was gradual, was made by the tribes separately, and was very incomplete, shows it to be much more reliable than the parallel story in Joshua, where the Hebrews are represented from a later point of view, acting as one people and accomplishing the conquest as they *should* have done rather than as they did. It is a fitting preface to the Book of Judges, for it shows how the different tribes were cut off from one another by unconquered Canaanite cities, so that they were exposed to attacks and oppressions, and could only with great difficulty form partial combinations against their enemies.

THE SUPPLEMENT. Chapters xvii.–xxi.

Chapters xvii and xviii contain an account of (*a*) the origin of a certain image which was established for a time in the hill-country of Ephraim; (*b*) the transference of that image from its original seat to Dan (Laish), where it remained until the end of the eighth century B.C. Connected with this image in both places was a Levitical priesthood. Included in this story is an account of a Danite migration from the south to the north, and the foundation of the city of Dan on the site of the older Laish. The general style of the stories makes it very probable that they were contained in the pre-Deuteronomic Book of Judges, and were derived from the same sources as that work. The entire absence of any Deuteronomic editorial notes seems to indicate that these stories were not incorporated in the Deuteronomic Book of Judges, but were added afterwards from the earlier work. The confusion of the narrative in xvii. 2–4, xviii. 14–20, and the multiplication of names used for the image or images, seem to show that, as in the stories of Judges, the author had varying traditions before him, and that he has sometimes blended these without making a consistent story.

Chapters xix to xxi contain the story of an outrage perpetrated by some roughs of Gibeah, the consequent punishment and almost complete annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin, and the means adopted to preserve this tribe from extinction. Although the story is one, there are two distinct literary parts in it. Chapter xix, containing the story of the outrage, is told in much the same style and in the same language as the stories of the judges and that of the Danite image. It may well have been a part of the collection of traditions made in the time of the kings. The following chapters (xx, xxi) are different in every respect. Here the story of the war against Benjamin is imbedded in a setting of post-exilic language and ideas. Just as the post-Deuteronomic writers retold the older history of Israel (see p. 8) from the Deuteronomic point of view, so after the introduction of the priestly law (about 400 B.C.) writers wrote and judged early history from the standpoint of these new laws. What this new standpoint was we see in the priestly laws of Leviticus and Numbers; how it was used in the rewriting of old traditions we see in the P narratives of Genesis to Joshua, in the recasting of history in Chronicles. Such a writer apparently took the story of the war against Benjamin from the pre-Deuteronomic Book of Judges and rewrote it in the style of Chronicles, and this has supplanted the simpler story here. There is no doubt that the earlier story is imbedded in our chapters, but it is impossible to say *with certainty* which verses belong to it [1].

The characteristics of the narrative that point to the late date are (*a*) the presentation of the people as a whole—Israel; (*b*) the conception of that whole as a *religious* community; (*c*) the exaggerated numbers. All of these are unhistorical as applied to the time of the judges.

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[1] Professor Moore suggests that the early story is contained in the following passages :—xx. $1^{a\,c}$, 3-8, 14, 19, 29, 36^{b}, 37^{a}, 38-41, 44^{a}, 47, xxi. 1, 15, 16^{c}, $17\text{-}19^{a}$, 21-23, apart from one or two brief notes.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOOK.

From what has been said in the preceding sections it may be gathered that the growth of the canonical Book of Judges was as follows:—

(*a*) In the period which followed the crossing of the Jordan the Hebrew tribes were continually occupied in conquering the Canaanites and maintaining their hold of the places they succeeded in capturing. This was the age in which great heroes arose in different tribes. These delivered their own tribes in times of great oppression, and became the subjects of traditions, which were handed down, sometimes in prose form, sometimes in verse.

(*b*) Some time after the monarchy was established and the Hebrews had undoubted possession of Palestine a literature arose. A part of this, we know from 2 Sam. i and Num. xxi. 14, consisted of collections of poems, while in the same period were written the histories which appear in the non-priestly parts of the Pentateuch and Joshua. It is possible that these two histories (J and E) contained collections of traditions of the judges.

(*c*) Somewhat later, but before the proclamation of Deuteronomy, a writer using the two collections of stories concerning the Hebrew judges wrote a new work in which the judges were made to follow one another as rulers over all Israel. It was this writer probably who introduced such supplementary material as the diplomatic intercourse between Jephthah and the Ammonite king (xi. 12 ff.). His work, however, contained not only stories of judges but other material, such as the stories found now in chapters xvii–xviii, xix, and the story of the Benjamite war in its simple form.

(*d*) After the Book of Deuteronomy had been published in 621, and had shown how the prophetic idea of the Divine discipline of Israel could be applied to the interpretation of past history, the pre-Deuteronomic Book of Judges was used as the basis of a work which was intended to show how the Divine discipline was exercised during the particular period of the people's history from the death of Joshua to the birth of Samuel. The writer of this work did not use all that was in the earlier book. The story of Abimelech (ix) shows no sign of his hand, and was probably omitted by him, and his work thus ended with xv. 20. On the other hand he added from his own pen the general interpretation of the course of history contained in ii. 6—iii. 6, and the formulae which precede and follow the stories of the greater judges. The mention of the minor judges contained no traditions, and did not illustrate the writer's view of history, therefore they have no formulae attached to them. Some system of chronology may have been present in the earlier work, but it was now brought into order, and was intended to fill up the period from Joshua to Samuel.

(*e*) Between the editing of the Deuteronomic Book of Judges and the reception of the work into the Canon was a period of some 300 years. During this time the book assumed a new form. A preface (i. 1—ii. 5), taken in the main from an old work, was put before the Deuteronomic editor's introduction. The stories of Abimelech (ix), the fate of Samson (xvi), the Danite image (xvii, xviii), and the Benjamite outrage (xix) were restored from the pre-Deuteronomic book. As Abimelech was not reckoned among the judges, the mention of Shamgar (iii. 31) was introduced to make up the number of judges to twelve, to correspond with the number of the tribes of Israel. For the early story of the war against Benjamin was substituted the late edition of it (xx, xxi). During these years also numerous short notes were added to explain geographical allusions, or give further details as to persons, or emphasize particular historical teachings, or express the writer's disapprobation of actions.

The outline given above is of course merely an attempt, founded entirely on internal evidence, to supply a probable history of the origin and history of the Book of Judges.

It should, however, be borne in mind that it is an attempt, not to make the work late, but to find out how much of it can possibly be early. The only fact that is *quite certain* is that our book in its present form became a canonical work about 200 B.C. In the eight or nine hundred years that elapsed between the time of the judges and the first authoritative appearance of our book, there may have been ten times as much editing and recasting of the work as has been suggested above. There was no special sanctity attached to the work until it became canonical. Every fortunate possessor of a manuscript of it was at liberty to add his own remarks, and it was open to any school of writers to recast the form of the whole. Such a recasting of older literature took place, we know, after the proclamation of Deuteronomy, and again when the priestly law was proclaimed later. It is unfortunate that in the changing fortunes and frequent exiles and sufferings of the Hebrew people the manuscripts of their literary works have perished, so that the earliest manuscript we have of the Book of Judges in Hebrew at the present day is not earlier than the tenth century of our era. Under such circumstances internal evidence is all we have to rely on, and probability, not certainty, is all we can hope to attain.

THE TEXT.

Although the present commentary is in the first place intended to be one on the English and not the Hebrew text, it is necessary at times to take account of some of the early translations in order to obtain the best sense.

The Hebrew text translated in our English version is that which was finally fixed in its present form by bodies of Jewish scholars called Massoretes, who added the vowels, accents, &c., in accordance with synagogal tradition between the second and eighth centuries A.D. Before this time consonants alone were written in Hebrew manuscripts, and the vowels were supplied by the reader. But the same consonants might have very different meanings according to the vowels supplied, hence when the Massoretes put vowels in the text, they gave not only the text itself, but also their interpretation of its meaning. That interpretation was the one of the synagogue at the time when they did their work, but differs at times from the one adopted in early translations, and is not always the most probable. Again, Hebrew words were written without spaces between them, and sentences were not divided from one another. The Massoretes in dividing up words and sentences only represent the traditional interpretation of their own time, and the versions often divide differently. In seeking to find the meaning of the original Hebrew, commentators have to take the consonantal text only as their basis. The Massoretic text with its vowels and marks of punctuation is valuable as giving the traditional interpretation of this text from the second century after Christ onwards. Other interpretation and help is to be derived from the early versions[1], one of which (the Septuagint) represents a text some three centuries earlier than the Massoretic. There is yet a third means by which the scholar may be able to come nearer to the meaning of the original Hebrew than either the Massoretes or the early translators. Hebrew is one of a class of languages, called Semitic, some of which have preserved old meanings of words which have dropped out of use in Hebrew, or become changed in the course of history. The amount of ancient Hebrew preserved to us is so small that many words occur once only. They have fallen out of use, and their meaning has been forgotten (see note, iii. 23). In such cases our only hope is in the presence of such a word in the kindred languages of Babylonia, Arabia, &c.

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[1] The chief versions used in the reconstruction of the Hebrew text are:—

(1) The Greek versions, comprising (*a*) that of the Septuagint made in Egypt in the second or first century B.C.; (*b*) those of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, all made before the time of Origen and existing only in fragments.

(2) The Latin or Vulgate, made by Jerome, 390-405 A.D.

(3) The Syriac or Peshitta, made before the end of the second century A.D.

VALUE OF THE BOOK.

The traditions collected together in the Book of Judges are invaluable to the student of the history and religion of Israel. The historian who may seek to have an orderly succession of events arranged according to the years in which they happened will find nothing to help him here. Even the chronology introduced by a later editor is too vague and unreliable for such a purpose. But if he be willing to put aside this modern method of writing history, and be content to know how a number of small tribes achieved a permanent settlement in a strange and hostile land, how their heroes acquired fame, how amidst all the diverse interests of different tribes the attachment to the same deity prevented their absorption by other peoples and made possible the later union into a kingdom, then our book will afford material enough. The time of the judges is that in which some of the greatest changes a people can undergo took place. At the beginning of this period the Hebrews were a nomadic people, who for a generation had wandered from place to place with their cattle and possessions; at the close they were settled agriculturists, settled in a country of a higher civilization than any of that generation had known before. In their earlier experience the tribal connexion was the only tie that bound one man to another; but in this period the elders of the tribe become the elders of the city, and a man's immediate neighbours come to be of greater importance to him than even his fellow tribesmen. The life of the desert had been simple and hard, but the latter part of Gideon's story shows that luxury had come with the settled life. The simple life of nomad times was kept before the people at a later time by prophets, Nazirites, and Rechabites; but the people were already being weakened. There were cowards in Gideon's army who had to be sent home. When we leave aside for the time the additions to the stories we have a rich treasury of popular literature. The song in chapter v, even in its present condition, is a most stirring composition, calling upon the people to bless its God for His deliverance, describing His march to their rescue, the gathering of the tribes, the battle, the death of Sisera, and that last fierce irony in the description of Sisera's household. Very different from this, but also interesting, is the specimen of the popular fable as used by Jotham (in chapter ix). The other stories too contain descriptions, which as literature claim attention. The intense pathos of the story of Jephthah's daughter (xi. 34–40) is the result of a simplicity and restraint in the narrative which give a striking power. The stories of Samson will always be of great interest to the lovers of folklore, and stand quite by themselves in old Hebrew literature.

The material afforded for the student of Israel's religion is great. We may be repelled by the schematic method adopted by the Deuteronomic editor in packing the stories into parcels carefully wrapped up in his formulae, but we have to acknowledge that his main idea was justified. It was when the people realized the sense of its allegiance to Yahweh as its God that it was strong and made progress. That sense of allegiance due was very different from the ethical conception of Yahweh-worship taught later by the prophets, and the forms of worship would not have been tolerated by Deuteronomy. There is no conception of spiritual worship or moral duty in our book. Ehud uses the name of God to secure an opportunity for assassination; the Hebrews chant the praise of Jael for her treacherous murder; Gideon's religion is full of superstition, and his great devotion to Yahweh is shown by his erection of an image; Jephthah sacrifices his daughter to Yahweh, and no angel interposes to prevent him; Samson's deeds are mostly characterized by an entire absence of morality; the Danites steal an image so as to worship God; and the Levite's relations to his concubine are not above reproach. Yet it was this common worship of Yahweh, imperfect as it was, that brought the people together later, and the progress from this condition to the spiritual and ethical worship taught a few centuries later by the prophets will ever be an object-lesson as to the way in which God has revealed Himself to a people and prepared them to be teachers to the world.

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The articles on the different judges in the two Bible Dictionaries mentioned above.

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SOURCES.

The following letters are placed in brackets in the Text to indicate the different sources.

[J.] The pre-Deuteronomic Book of Judges.

[D.] The Deuteronomic editor's additions. These sometimes incorporate material from the older sources, as in ii. 6—iii. 6, where ii. 6, 8-10, 13, 20, 21, 23 are probably thus taken over.

[T.] Material derived from earlier works in which traditions were collected.

[A.] Additions made after the Deuteronomic editing. This has been put to chapters xx and xxi, but such additions occur, generally as short notes, all through the book[1]. They are usually explanations or additions made to heighten the effect of the narrative.

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[1] An attempt has been made to separate the book into its constituent parts and indicate them by the use of different colours in *The Book of Judges. A new English Translation printed in colours, exhibiting the composite structure of the book. With explanatory notes and pictorial illustrations, by the Rev. G. F. Moore, D.D.* (London : James Clarke & Co., 1898.)

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(*b*) The War against Benjamin (xix. 1—xxi. 25).

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

[T] AND it came to pass after the death of Joshua, that 1

The Title. 'The Book of Judges'; in Hebrew simply 'Judges.'

i. 1—ii. 5. *The position of the Hebrews in Palestine at the beginning of the period of the Judges, and some incidents connected with the invasion.* This section is not a continuation of the narrative in the Book of Joshua, but deals with the period covered by vii–xxi of that book. The Hebrews are in verse 1 at Gilgal (Joshua v–vi). The Jordan has been crossed, Jericho has been taken—else they had not been able to advance—and different parts of the land have been allotted for the tribes to conquer (verse 3). One or two striking incidents in the campaign of Judah and Simeon are told, with a brief mention of what Benjamin was unable to accomplish. From these three tribes of South Palestine the writer turns to the 'House of Joseph' in the north, one notable incident being recorded—connected with the capture of Beth-el. Then follows a list of the failures of different tribes, beginning with Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, continuing with those of Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan. Issachar and Levi are not mentioned. This narrative gives a different idea of the settlement of the Hebrews in Palestine from that which is derived from the longer account in the Book of Joshua. In Joshua the Hebrews acting together conquer Palestine, destroying the original inhabitants, and then dividing the land among the tribes. Here the tribes go up to the districts which have fallen to them by lot and meet with but very partial success. All the later history shows that this is the truer account. To account for this failure of the Hebrews is the object of several passages in the first part of the book (ii. 1–5, 20–21, 22; iii. 1–2), and may be said to be one of the objects for which the whole book was written.

Some parts of this account are found also in Joshua (see verses 10–15, 21, 27, 29), and as they do not seem to be integral parts of the narrative there, but indeed are inconsistent with the general purpose of the book, it is probable that they were inserted from another work (now lost), from which also this section of Judges was compiled.

Although the material was thus taken from an older source, it was evidently not put before the Deuteronomic Book of Judges

the children of Israel asked of the LORD, saying, Who shall
go up for us first against the Canaanites, to fight against
2 them? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I
3 have delivered the land into his hand. And Judah said
unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot,

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until late, for that work begins in ii. 6 with the events which happened after the great meeting at Shechem recorded in Joshua xxiv.

i. 1–21. *The invasion of South Palestine.* The tribe of Judah is the first to sever itself from the camp of the Hebrews at Gilgal, and together with Simeon advances along the road from the Jordan valley to Jerusalem. They fight with the king of Jerusalem, and having defeated him, pass by that city, turn southwards, and encounter the peoples of the hill-country, the Negeb and the lowland. The tribe of Caleb, a Kenizzite, occupies Hebron, and a branch of it—the family of Othniel—settles in Debir and its district. The Kenites, who went up with Judah, go still further south, and settle among the Amalekites. Hormah is occupied by Judah. In the hilly country the Judahites are generally successful, but they cannot stand against the nations who use chariots in the plains. Jerusalem remains in the power of the Jebusites.

1. after the death of Joshua. These words have been introduced here to connect this book with the close of the Book of Joshua. But this verse tells of the beginning of the invasion of Palestine, and Joshua died long after. Cf. ii. 6–8.

asked of the Lord, or consulted the oracle of Yahweh, as also in xviii. 5, xx. 18 (cf. Hos. iv. 12; Ezek. xxi. 21). Various methods of ascertaining Yahweh's will were employed by the Hebrews, such as the casting of lots, the use of the ephod with Urim and Thummim. Dreams and natural phenomena like the rustling of trees were interpreted as helps for guidance in action, and magicians were employed to raise the dead that they might disclose the secrets of the future. On this occasion probably lots were cast.

the Canaanites are here the inhabitants of Palestine generally. The name is used in the ethnographical sense, with the same meaning, in the Egyptian inscriptions. The geographical word 'Canaan' is used by the Egyptians from 1800 B.C. onwards for the lowlands on the Mediterranean coast from Phoenicia southwards.

2. Judah is represented genealogically as Jacob's fourth son by Leah, and as born in Haran (Gen. xxix. 35, J). As a tribe it was of composite origin (see verse 12), though at the writer's time it was doubtless more homogeneous.

3. Simeon: a tribe whose descent is ascribed to the second son that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the 4 Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they

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of Jacob and Leah. It seems to have been early absorbed in Judah, and is not mentioned either in the Song of Deborah (v) or in the Blessing of Moses (Deut. xxxiii). The cities allotted to it in Joshua xix. 2-6 are counted as belonging to Judah in Joshua xv. 26-32, 42 (P).

my lot: i.e. that part of the land which has fallen to me in the casting of lots. It is that district which Judah is to conquer, if it can.

i. 4-7. The main road from Gilgal to South Palestine leads direct to Jerusalem, and if its ruler was hostile Judah and Simeon must have fought against him before being able to advance further. Such a battle seems to be recorded in these verses, but it is difficult to know what the original form of this story was. Adoni-bezek was evidently king of Jerusalem, for his people carried him thither to die after he had been mutilated by the Hebrews. But the name Adoni-bezek can scarcely be correct, for the second part of such Canaanitish names was usually the name of a god, not as here the name of a place. In Joshua x the king of Jerusalem is Adoni-zedek, which is probably correct (cf. the name Melchizedek). Of a place called Bezek we know nothing. A city of this name is mentioned in 1 Sam. xi. 8, but is in the north, and no modern site has been identified as the Bezek of this story. Jerusalem was evidently not captured by the Hebrews (verse 21), but by the victory over its king they were enabled to pass by it and advance to the conquest of the south.

4. the Canaanites and the Perizzites. Four names of peoples in Palestine are mentioned in this section—Canaanites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Amorites. Of these the Jebusites are always mentioned in connexion with Jerusalem (see verse 21). The Perizzites may have been one of the tribes of Palestine, or simply, as the meaning of the word suggests, the villagers or dwellers in unwalled places. The Canaanites (cf. verse 1) in the narrower use seem to be the lowlanders; the Amorites the highlanders. The former name is naturally common in the inscriptions of the Egyptians who approached Palestine from the plains on the Mediterranean coast, the latter in those of the Assyrians who came to Palestine through the hill-country of the north. The use of these two terms in O.T. history is not ethnological but geographical, and varies with different authors,

5 smote of them in Bezek ten thousand men. And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they smote the Canaanites and the Perizzites.
6 But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes.
7 And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

8 And the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and
9 set the city on fire. And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the hill country, and in the South, and in the lowland.

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and as the country became better known. The verse seems to be a note introduced perhaps from the margin.

6. Mutilation of a captive to render him unfit for further warfare was known not only in the East, but even among the Athenians. who decreed that they would cut off the right thumbs of all Aeginetan captives to render them unfit for wielding a spear.

7. There were many kings in Palestine and the surrounding countries, for a kingdom consisted usually of a city and the district in which it was situated. The number seventy is a round one.

i. 8. *The destruction of Jerusalem.*

8. Jerusalem. This was one of the ancient cities of Palestine, and is mentioned as Uru-salim in the Tell-el-Amarna letters ca. 1400 B.C., when it was subject to Egypt. At this time it belongs to a Canaanitish tribe called Jebusites, of whom we know nothing, although they are several times mentioned in O.T. books. The site of this city was the south-east hill with the precipitous slopes to the valley of Kidron on the east and south, and separated from the other hills at that time by the Tyropaean valley on the west, and a ravine on the north, both now filled up and part of the city. It was not taken from the Jebusites until David's time (2 Sam. v. 6-9).

9. *The southward march.* The three divisions of the south country mentioned here are: (1) the hill-country from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea on the east, to the Negeb on the south, and the 'lowland' on the west; (2) the Negeb (translated 'the South' in R.V.)

And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in
Hebron: (now the name of Hebron beforetime was
Kiriath-arba:): and they smote Sheshai, and Ahiman,
and Talmai. And from thence he went against the 11
inhabitants of Debir. (Now the name of Debir before-
time was Kiriath-sepher.) And Caleb said, He that 12

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mentioned in Egyptian inscriptions, i. e. the district south of Hebron, consisting in the northern half of hills, in the southern of a dry limestone plateau; (3) the Shefelah ('lowland') or range of low hills between the hill-country and the plains on the Mediterranean coast. These plains do not enter into this tradition (see verse 18).

i. 10–15. *The Kenizzite conquest of Hebron and Debir.* This incident is also related in Joshua xv. 13–19 (cf. xiv. 13–15), where verses 15–19 are the same as verses 11–15 here. Verse 20 should be restored to verse 10, to which it belongs. In verse 11 the pronoun 'he' refers to Judah in verse 10, but in the more original form of the story in Joshua it refers rightly to Caleb.

10 (and **20**). **Hebron,** one of the most ancient cities of Palestine according to Hebrew tradition (Num. xiii. 22), still exists as el-Khulil in a valley among the hills about twenty miles south of Jerusalem. The former name was Kiriath-arba, i. e. 'the city of four,' which may have meant the city of four quarters or divisions. Later Jewish tradition explained it as the city where the four patriarchs Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were buried. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are all associated with Hebron in Genesis. The inhabitants at this time are called Canaanites by the author, and Anakites (verse 20) by the tradition he reproduces (see below).

Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai are the names, of Aramaic type, of three tribes or families. In verse 20 they are referred to as 'sons of Anak,' but this means literally 'sons of the (long) neck,' i. e. giants. These are mentioned several times in Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, and seem to have been a class of strong men among the original inhabitants of Palestine. Another tradition said that Joshua annihilated them (Joshua xi. 21, 22, D).

11. Debir is placed in the Negeb in verse 15; in the hill-country of Judah in Joshua xi. 21, and thus was probably on the border of the two districts. It is identified with edh-Dhāherīyeh, southwest of Hebron.

Kiriath-sepher means 'Book-city' in Hebrew. We cannot, however, be certain that 'sepher' meant 'book' in the ancient language of South Palestine. According to Joshua xv. 49 the old name was Kiriath-sannah.

12. Caleb was a Kenizzite, and so an Edomite (Gen. xxxvi. 42),

smiteth Kiriath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will **I** give
13 Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel the son of
Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave
14 him Achsah his daughter to wife. And it came to pass,
when she came *unto him*, that she moved him to ask of
her father a field: and she lighted down from off her ass;
15 and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou? And she
said unto him, Give me a blessing; for that thou hast set
me in the land of the South, give me also springs of
water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the
nether springs.

16 And the children of the Kenite, Moses' brother in law,

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who had joined Judah in attacking the south of Palestine, and especially Hebron and its neighbourhood. According to Joshua xiv. 6–15 Moses had promised him this district which he had spied out for the Hebrews, and Joshua gave it to him forty-five years later. In David's time the tribe of Caleb was distinguished from Judah (1 Sam. xxx. 14; cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 3), but later was identified with it so completely that in 1 Chron. ii it has become one of the most important branches of Judah. The name Caleb means 'dog,' and is thought by some to point to early totemism.

Achsah is mentioned only in this story and in 1 Chron. ii. 49.

13. Othniel is mentioned only here, in iii. 9–11; Joshua xv. 17; and 1 Chron. iv. 13.

14. that she moved him. The Greek and Latin versions read 'and he incited her,' which is in accordance with what follows.

15. a blessing: 'a present' as in R. V. marg., so also in Gen. xxxiii. 11; 1 Sam. xxv. 27, xxx. 26; 2 Kings v. 15.

thou hast set me in the land of the South is more accurate than R. V. marg., 'given me the land of the South.'

springs of water: really a proper name, Gullath-mayim, so in the latter part of the verse, 'And Caleb gave her Gullath-illith and Gullath-tahtith.' These were probably the springs now called Seil ed-Dilbeh, three groups of fourteen springs between el-Khulil and edh-Dhāherīyeh.

i. 16. *The Kenites.* The Hebrew text is imperfect at the beginning, and we restore from the Greek 'the children of Hobab the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law.'

16. The Kenites were a nomadic non-Israelitish people, mentioned in Gen. xv. 19 with the Kenizzites, also in the Balaam prophecy, Num. xxiv. 21 f. According to this story they marched

went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which is in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt with the people. And 17
Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they smote the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called Hormah. Also 18
Judah took Gaza with the border thereof, and Ashkelon with the border thereof, and Ekron with the border thereof. And the LORD was with Judah; and he drave out 19
the inhabitants of the hill country; for he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had

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with Judah (to whom they are counted in 1 Chron. ii. 55) from Jericho (the 'city of palm trees'), but if we accept the reading of some recensions of the Greek version at the end of this verse, and read 'with the Amalekite' instead of 'with the people,' they did not settle in Judah, but went further south among their kinsmen. This is supported by the account of David's correspondence with them in 1 Sam. xv. 6 (and cf. 1 Sam. xxvii. 10, xxx. 29). One branch of the people, however, wandered to the north (see iv. 11).

the city of palm trees is Jericho. See Deut. xxxiv. 3; Judges iii. 13.

the wilderness of Judah, which is in the south of Arad. The 'wilderness of Judah' is the hilly country on the west of the Dead Sea. Arad is supposed to be the modern Tell 'Arād, south-east of Hebron, east of Beer-sheba. The introduction of the Negeb (see verse 4) is confusing. The Greek version reads 'at the descent' (or 'pass') of Arad.

i. 17. *The destruction of Zephath.* The name Zephath occurs only here. The other name, Hormah, was associated by a tradition in Num. xxi. 3 with its destruction by Moses. Its site is unknown.

17. utterly destroyed it: R. V. marg. 'devoted,' i. e. made its entire destruction an offering to Yahweh (so Deut. ii. 34, iii. 6, and frequently).

18. *Judah in Philistia.* Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron are all in the Philistine plain, south of Jaffa. The verse is clearly unhistoric. It is inconsistent with the next verse, and is contradicted by iii. 3 and all the later history. The Greek version reads, 'Judah did not take,' &c.

19. Here we have a general summary of the result of Judah's

20 chariots of iron. And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as
Moses had spoken: and he drave out thence the three
21 sons of Anak. And the children of Benjamin did not
drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem: but
the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin in
Jerusalem, unto this day.

22 And the house of Joseph, they also went up against
23 Beth-el: and the LORD was with them. And the house
of Joseph sent to spy out Beth-el. (Now the name of
24 the city beforetime was Luz.) And the watchers saw a
man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him,
Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and
25 we will deal kindly with thee. And he shewed them the

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invasion. The new-comers, with all the vigour of nomads fresh from the desert, swept the quieter settled peoples from the hills; but in the plains, where chariots were used, they could not stand before the Canaanites.

chariots of iron: see on iv. 3.

20. See verse 10.

21. Jerusalem. The words of this verse are found also in Joshua xv. 63, except that there we read 'children of Judah' both times for 'children of Benjamin,' and '*could* not drive them out' for '*did* not drive them out.' In xix. 10 ff. Jerusalem is 'this city of the Jebusites,' 'the city of a stranger, where there are none of the children of Israel.' Jerusalem was first captured by David (2 Sam. v. 6 ff.).

the Jebusites were a people of whom we know nothing save that they held Jerusalem until the time of David.

i. 22-29. *The invasion of Central Palestine.* Attention is now directed from the south to the centre; from Judah to the house of Joseph. Again we have nothing but a fragment of tradition.

i. 22-26. *The capture of Beth-el.*

22. the house of Joseph includes Ephraim and Manasseh (Joshua xvii. 17 f.), and Benjamin according to 2 Sam. xix. 20.

also went up, as Judah had gone up. See verse 4.

Beth-el, now a village called Beitin, nine and a half miles north of Jerusalem. According to a tradition in Gen. xxviii. 19, the change of name from Luz to Beth-el was associated with Jacob's dream (but cf. xxxv. 6). In Joshua xvi. 2, Luz and Beth-el are mentioned as two separate places.

entrance into the city, and they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but they let the man go and all his family. And the man went into the land of the Hittites, 26
and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day.

And Manasseh did not drive out *the inhabitants of* 27
Beth-shean and her towns, nor *of* Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell

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26. the land of the Hittites is probably in the north of Syria, where the Egyptian inscriptions from 1500 B.C. and the Assyrian inscriptions from 1100 B.C. place the Hittites. There were, however, Hittites also in the region of Hebron (see Gen. xxiii, 'children of Heth'). The site of the new Luz is not known.

i. 27–34. *The failure of different tribes to subdue the whole of their allotted territory.* Benjamin's failure has been mentioned in verse 21. Various interpretations of Yahweh's purpose in permitting this failure are given in ii. 21 ff., iii. 1, and iii. 2. The practical result of these failures was to prevent for a long time any united action on a large scale, and to hinder the establishment of a kingdom until the time of Saul and David.

27. Manasseh. Cf. Joshua xvii. 11–13.

Beth-shean (the modern Beisān) was in the Jordan plain at the east end of the valley of Jezreel, and so commanded the eastern approach to the Plain of Esdraelon.

Taanach (now T'annuk), and **Megiddo** (now Lejjūn), four miles away, are both in the south part of the Plain of Esdraelon. Both Beth-shean and Megiddo lay on the high-road from Damascus to Egypt.

Dor (now Tantura), on the Mediterranean coast, about ten miles south of the end of Mount Carmel.

Ibleam is probably the modern Bel'ameh, at the south-east corner of the Plain of Esdraelon, south of Jenīn. Some, however, identify it with Yebla, about seven miles north-west of Beth-shean.

and her towns: i.e. the districts of which these cities were the centres. The importance of these cities lay in the fact that they completely commanded the Plain of Esdraelon, the battlefield of Palestine, and must have cut off the northern tribes from free communication with those of the centre and south. It

28 in that land. And it came to pass, when Israel was
waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to taskwork,
and did not utterly drive them out.

29 And Ephraim drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt
in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

30 Zebulun drave not out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor
the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt
among them, and became tributary.

31 Asher drave not out the inhabitants of Acco, nor the
inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of
32 Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: but the Asherites
dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land:
for they did not drive them out.

33 Naphtali drave not out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh,
nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among

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is strange that none of these cities were really in the 'lot' of Manasseh. Three were in the territory of Issachar (not mentioned in this chapter); the other, Dor, was in Asher. Cf. Joshua xvii. 11.

28. The Philistines later took the country as far as Beth-shean, and David seems to have secured these cities for Israel by his victories over these people. It was under Solomon that the Canaanites were put to forced labour (see 1 Kings ix. 20, 21).

29. Ephraim. Cf. Joshua xvi. 10.

Gezer (the modern Tell Jezar), on the edge of the Shephelah, a few miles east of Ekron. The Canaanites retained the city until it was taken by Egypt and given to Solomon's Egyptian wife, when Solomon rebuilt it as a fortress (1 Kings ix. 15–17).

i. 30–33 *The invasion of North Palestine.*

30. Zebulun. Cf. Joshua xix. 10–16.

Kitron is mentioned here only, **Nahalol** here and in Joshua xix. 15, xxi. 35. Neither can be identified now.

31. Asher. Cf. Joshua xix. 24–31.

Acco (now 'Akka), **Zidon** (now Saida), and **Achzib** (now ez Zib, north of 'Akka) are all on the coast. The sites of the other cities mentioned can only be conjectured.

33. Naphtali. Cf. Joshua xix. 32–39.

Beth-shemesh (not identified), and **Beth-anath** (perhaps the modern 'Ainītha, six miles north from Kedesh Naphtali [Qades]), were ancient sacred places, the former dedicated to the Sun (Shemesh), the latter to the goddess Anath (see iii. 31).

the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became tributary unto them.

And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the 34
hill country: for they would not suffer them to come
down to the valley: but the Amorites would dwell in 35
mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the
hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they
became tributary. And the border of the Amorites was 36
from the ascent of Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

And the angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to 2

34, 35. Dan. Cf. Joshua xix. 40 ff. The fate of Dan differed from that of most of the other tribes, in that they were pushed back into the hills and never succeeded in subduing the natives. Discouraged by their failure, a number of them afterwards went north and settled near the source of the Jordan (see xviii). The Canaanites of the territory they had forsaken were later oppressed by the house of Joseph, according to verse 35, *lit.* 'the hand of the house of Joseph was heavy on them.'

the Amorites are here mentioned for the first time (see verse 4).

mount Heres is mentioned here only.

Aijalon is the present Yālō, about thirteen miles from Jerusalem on the way to Jaffa.

Shaalbim is not known certainly. Selbīt, about three miles from Yālō, has been suggested as the site.

i. 36. *The southern boundary of Palestine.*

36. the ascent of Akrabbim (i. e. 'the pass of Scorpions'), generally identified with the modern Naqb-eṣ-Ṣafa on the road from Petra to Hebron. According to Joshua xv. 3 it was on the border of Judah and Edom, and there is no doubt that in this verse we must read 'Edomites' (as in the Greek translation) instead of 'Amorites.' The site of **Sela** (R.V. marg.) is not known.

The Edomites in Hebrew tradition figure as descendants of Esau, and thus akin to the Hebrews. As neighbours they are constantly mentioned from the time of Moses, until one of them (Herod) became king of the Jews.

ii. 1–5. *Transference of the* RELIGIOUS *centre from Gilgal to Bochim (Beth-el).* The tribes of Israel have now settled in Palestine, and begun (rather than finished) their work of conquest. The

Bochim. And he said, I made you to go up out of

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camp at Gilgal (i. 1) is deserted save for the presence of the Deity. Yahweh still remains in His abode on Mount Sinai, whence He will come later to help the people in battle (v. 4), and whither Elijah will go later still to visit Him (1 Kings xix. 8 ff.); but the ark has been among the people, and the 'angel of Yahweh' has accompanied them (Exod. xxxii. 34). The ark is mentioned once only in Judges, and is there at Beth-el (xx. 27), and thither the angel now goes up. The original tradition regarding this is told in verses 1^a and 5^b. 'And the angel of Yahweh came up from Gilgal to Beth-el (see below), and they sacrificed there to Yahweh.'

Between the two parts of this tradition the editor introduces an explanation of Yahweh's reason for not giving the Israelites complete possession of the land. This he does in the form of an address by the angel. Yahweh had commanded the Israelites to make no covenant with the Canaanites, but to break down their altars. (In chapter i we were told they were unable to conquer the Canaanites, because of their superior strength, especially in the plains.) Because they have not done this they are blamed, and warned that their allies will be adversaries to them and the local religions will be a snare to them. These words thus form a general introduction to the many troubles narrated in the following chapters. (For another introduction and explanation see iii. 1 ff.)

1. the angel of the LORD in this book is Yahweh Himself, appearing in a form perceptible by the human senses. He appears to Gideon (vi. 11–22), and to Manoah (xiii), both times apparently in human form, and is mentioned in the Song of Deborah (v. 23). In vi. 14–16 and xiii. 22 it is clear that he is identical with Yahweh.

Gilgal, between the Jordan and Jericho, was the first camp of the Hebrews on the west of the Jordan (Joshua iv. 19). At the present day a hill and a well in this neighbourhood have preserved the name in an Arabic form, Jiljūlia (three miles east of Jericho).

Bochim ('weepers' or 'weeping'). As the place only received this name on account of the action that follows, the Greek version is probably right in reading 'Beth-el' here (see i. 23). This town is mentioned as a religious centre in xx. 18, xxi. 2; cf. 1 Sam. vii. 16, x. 3; and the ark was put there according to xx. 27.

ii. 1^b–5^a. *The address of the angel of Yahweh.*

I made you to go up. The Hebrew means 'I *will* bring you up.' The beginning of the speech is incomplete, and the simplest thing is to restore '**and**' before this sentence. This, according to Hebrew idiom, would give the verb the perfect sense which is

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Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware
unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my cove-
nant with you: and ye shall make no covenant with 2
the inhabitants of this land; ye shall break down their
altars: but ye have not hearkened unto my voice: why
have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not 3
drive them out from before you; but they shall be *as
thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto
you. And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD 4
spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that
the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And they 5
called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacri-
ficed there unto the LORD.

[**D**] Now when Joshua had sent the people away, the 6

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required. The reference to Yahweh's oath to the forefathers is frequent in Deuteronomy.

2. The covenant involving the destruction of Canaanitish altars is mentioned in Exod. xxxiv. 10–15.

why have ye done this? rather, 'What have you done?'

3. Wherefore I also said: on another occasion. Cf. Joshua xxiii. 13; Num. xxxiii. 55, from which passages the words 'as thorns' are supplied in the English version to make sense.

and their gods shall be a snare unto you. The figure is taken from such passages as Exod. xxiii. 33, xxxiv. 12; Deut. vii. 16.

5. Bochim. As the name does not occur again, we may gather that it was merely given on this occasion, but did not prevail. There was a spot, however, near Beth-el, called Allon Bachuth ('tree of weeping'), connected by a tradition in Gen. xxxv. 8 with the burial of Rebekah's nurse: cf. also the 'valley of Baca,' Ps. lxxxiv. 6.

ii. 6—iii. 6. *Introduction.*

In this section the Deuteronomic editor announces, partly in his own words, partly adopting the words he found in the book before him, the general course of the history he is going to write in detail later. He begins where Joshua left off (in Joshua xxiv. 28), and passes briefly from the time of that leader to the days of those who followed the survivors of his generation. These forsake Yahweh and serve the native gods. Yahweh is angry, and delivers the Hebrews into the hand of their enemies, but in their

children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance
7 to possess the land. And the people served the LORD
all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that
outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the
8 LORD, that he had wrought for Israel. And Joshua the
son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an
9 hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in
the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the
hill country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain

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distress raises up 'judges' who deliver them. After the death of a judge, however, the people are worse in their ingratitude than before, and Yahweh determines not to enable them to destroy the Canaanites. Lists are then given of the peoples on their borders, and of those among whom they are placed who oppressed the people or ensnared them by their alliances.

ii. 6–10. *Transition from the time of Joshua to the period of the Judges.* Verses 6–9 are identical with Joshua xxiv. 28–30, except for one or two variations.

6. Now when Joshua sent the people away. This act is unintelligible here, because not connected with any other event. In Joshua it follows the great gathering at Shechem.

unto his inheritance to possess the land: to his allotted portion to enter into possession of the land.

7. the elders that outlived Joshua: *lit.* 'who prolonged days after Joshua,' an expression common in Deuteronomic writings (Deut. iv. 40, v. 33, &c.).

who had seen: in Joshua 'who had known' (cf. verse 10).

9. in the border: i. e. 'within the territory.' It is mentioned in Joshua xix. 49, 50.

Timnath-heres ('territory of the Sun'). In Joshua 'heres' is inverted into 'serah' to avoid the heathen allusion to Sun-worship. Some identify the place with the modern Tibnah, about twelve and a half miles ENE. of Lydda, others with Kefr Hārith, nine miles south of Shechem. *Mount Gaash* must be a hill south of one of these sites. It is otherwise unknown.

the hill country of Ephraim. The hill-country or mountain range of Ephraim was that part of the highlands of Palestine which extended from north of Jerusalem to the Plain of Esdraelon. With plains on the north-east and west, and a related people (the Judahites) on the southern continuation of their mountains, the Ephraimites seem to have been the most firmly seated people of the Hebrews, and the least disturbed by invasions

of Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered 10
unto their fathers: and there arose another generation
after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the work
which he had wrought for Israel.

And the children of Israel did that which was evil 11
in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baalim: and they 12

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of neighbouring tribes. It was doubtless owing to this in part that they regarded themselves as being superior to other Hebrew tribes, as when they rebuked Gideon (viii. 1–3) and Jephthah (xii. 1 ff.), though in the latter case they learned that their superiority ceased when they left their own hills.

10. all that generation: that is, the generation of those who survived Joshua.

ii. 11–13. *The faithlessness of Israel.* In verses 11 and 12 we have the first part of the formula which is used by the post-Deuteronomic writer (see Introduction), with but slight variations, to tell how after the death of each of the greater judges the Hebrews ceased to give all their worship to Yahweh alone (see iii. 7, 12, iv. 1, vi. 1, viii. 33, x. 6, xiii. 1). Here it comes after the death of Joshua, but is stated in general terms as an introduction to the whole work. The sin of the Hebrews is described as ingratitude. Yahweh had brought them up from Egypt, yet they gave part of their worship to the Canaanitish gods. Even the worshippers of Yahweh at this period believed in the existence of other gods, although they recognized that their worship was due to their own God only. While they knew that Yahweh had done so much for them in the past, they thought that the local deities would do more for them in their new settlements, hence their apostasy.

11. the Baalim were the local gods. Baal (of which Baalim is the plural) means 'possessor,' and is used for 'husband' as possessor of his wife, and for a god as possessor of a land, district, or city. Except therefore when speaking generally of a god, it was necessary to identify him by some added word, and this word was usually the name of his possession, whether a place, as the Baal of Tyre, the Baal of Peor, &c., or a part of the animal kingdom, as Baal-zebub ('the Baal of flies,' if the word has been correctly transmitted). Or he might be called the Baal of a covenant ('Baal-berith,' see viii. 33). The Baal of a place had sometimes a proper name of his own; thus Melkart was the name of the Baal of Tyre. When the Hebrews gained possession of Palestine their God Yahweh became the Baal of the country from their point of view, and so the word enters into some of

forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them, and bowed themselves down unto them: and they
13 provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the
14 LORD, and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand
15 before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the

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their proper names, as Jerubbaal and Saul's son Eshbaal. In later years, when the term had become offensive, writers changed Eshbaal ('man of Baal') into Ishbosheth ('man of shame'), and the name of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth was probably Mephibaal originally. The Baals were generally nature-gods. Their altars were on high-places, and offerings were made of animals and the produce of the soil. Sacred posts (*asherahs*) and stones (*massebahs*) were accessories to the altars. The Baals had their priests, whose extravagances appear in the story of the sacrifice on Mount Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 20 ff.). Gross immorality and the sacrifice of human life were sometimes associated with the worship of the Baals.

13. This verse being a mere reiteration in slightly varying form of the preceding, it is likely that the editor has inserted it as it stands from the earlier work. It follows very naturally on verse 10.

the Ashtaroth: should be read Ashtoreth, this being the Hebrew name of the goddess Astarte, i. e. the Phoenician 'Ashtart,' worshipped also in Babylonia as 'Ishtar,' in Arabia as 'Athtar,' in Syria as 'Athar.' In this verse 'the Baal and the Ashtoreth' is used as a general expression for the native deities male and female.

ii. 14, 15. *Yahweh's anger and punishment of Israel.* This is the second part of the Deuteronomic formula (see verses 11–13) in general terms. In the other places where it is used the name of the particular people into whose power Yahweh gave Israel is substituted. (See iii. 8, 12, iv. 2, vi. 1, x. 7, xiii. 1.)

15. they went out: i. e. to war, as in Deut. xxviii. 7; 2 Sam. xi 1, &c., and see Judges xi. 3.

hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were sore distressed. And the LORD raised up 16
judges, which saved them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they hearkened not unto their 17
judges, for they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves down unto them: they turned aside quickly out of the way wherein their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of the LORD; *but* they did
not so. And when the LORD raised them up judges, 18
then the LORD was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groaning by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.
But it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they 19

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as the LORD had sworn: according to the traditions recorded in Deut. xxviii, &c.

16. Yahweh raised up judges who delivered the Hebrews.

17. This verse seems to be a note introduced later into the Deuteronomic introduction. The Deuteronomic editor in verses 18, 19, and through the book generally, gives the impression that the Hebrews worshipped Yahweh during the lifetime of the judges, and only fell away again after their death. But a stricter view in later times judged the setting up of an image even for Yahweh-worship as sin, and such a story as that of Gideon's ephod (viii. 27) would lead to the opinion expressed in this verse, which may have been only a marginal note at first, but has now become part of the text.

they went a whoring after other gods. This figure for idolatry is worked out at length in Hosea i–iii, and occurs in Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16; Deut. xxxi. 16, &c.

18–22. Yahweh was with the judges whom He had raised up, and helped them, but when, after their death, the people stubbornly returned to the worship of the local gods, He was angry and declared He would not after this drive out the Canaanitish peoples unconquered by Joshua, and thus He would test Israel to know whether they would walk in the way of their (pious) fathers or not.

18. it repented the LORD. The correct translation is, 'Yahweh was sorry,' or 'was moved to pity.'

turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their doings, nor from
20 their stubborn way. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel; and he said, Because this nation have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;
21 I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them
22 of the nations which Joshua left when he died: that by them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep
23 it, or not. So the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

3 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many as had not known
2 all the wars of Canaan; only that the generations of the

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20. my covenant: already referred to in ii. 2.

21. 'Since they have transgressed My covenant (or command), I on My part will not continue driving out the peoples of Palestine, as I did while Joshua lived and the people served Me alone; I will in future not drive out a single man before them among the nations who were not conquered at the time when Joshua died.' Who these nations were is explained more in detail in iii. 3 ff.

22. Another reason for Yahweh's action is given in iii. 1, 2.

23. This verse cannot be by the same author as verse 21, for there Yahweh's determination is made *after* Joshua's death.

iii. 1-6. *The unconquered nations and Israel's relation to them.*

1, 2. The first half of verse 1 connects with ii. 22 (the purpose of *proving* Israel being repeated), and is continued in verse 3. The words between seem to be a note or notes introduced into the text. In them is given another (see ii. 22) explanation of Yahweh's purpose in not utterly destroying the Canaanites, namely, that He did not wish the people to settle down into ease and ignorance of warfare.

The question why the Hebrew tribes were not able to annihilate the Canaanites is one that evidently exercised the minds of later

children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the
least such as beforetime knew nothing thereof; *namely*, 3
the five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites,
and the Zidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount
Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in
of Hamath. And they were for to prove Israel by them, 4
to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers
by the hand of Moses. And the children of Israel dwelt 5

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writers. Thus we have in chapter i the *fact* mentioned that they *could* not, because of the superiority of the inhabitants. In the preface (ii. 1 ff.) this failure is ascribed to Yahweh, and a reason given for His action; in ii. 22 another reason is assigned, and in these verses still another.

3. The **Philistines** formed a confederacy of five cities (Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron), hence the 'five lords.' Cf. Joshua xiii. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 16-18.

all the Canaanites must mean all who had not yet been conquered, or the term 'Canaanite' is used in the restricted sense (used elsewhere in certain passages) of those who dwelt in the west and south-west lowlands of Palestine (cf. i. 1).

the Zidonians: Joshua xiii. 4, standing here, as in Homer, for the Phoenicians, as Zidon was the chief city of the Phoenician confederacy for a long period.

the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon. The Hivites dwelt in the interior of Palestine, not in the north. We must read 'Hittites.' The same mistake is made in Joshua xi. 3, where the Greek translation has the correct name; cf. i. 26.

Baal-hermon should probably be 'Baal-gad under mount Hermon,' as in Joshua xiii. 5, xi. 17, a place on the west side of Hermon.

Hamath: the modern Hamā on the Orontes, north of Damascus.

the entering in of Hamath: i. e. the frontier or boundary of Hamath is mentioned several times in the O. T. as the northern boundary of Israel (Amos vi. 14; 1 Kings viii. 65; 2 Kings xiv. 25, &c.).

5. In verse 3 the nations that lay on the boundaries of Israel were enumerated. In this verse are mentioned those *among* whom they lived. Ten times in the O. T. these six peoples are named together, and generally in the same order. In four other passages the Girgashites are added.

among the Canaanites; the Hittite, and the Amorite, and
6 the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite: and
they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave
their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.
7 And the children of Israel did that which was evil in

For the Canaanites, Amorites, Perizzites, and Jebusites, see i. 1, 4.

The Hittites in this verse are most probably the people of that name who lived in the neighbourhood of Hebron (Gen. xxiii). It is doubtful whether these were in any way related to the Hittites of the north (see i. 26 and iii. 3).

The Hivites were also pre-Israelitish inhabitants of Palestine. Their chief settlements seem to have been in Central Palestine (Joshua ix. 7; Gen. xxxiv. 2).

iii. 7—xvi. 31. THE JUDGES.

This section mentions thirteen men who saved or judged or ruled over Israel. Of these Shamgar was probably introduced later into the Deuteronomic book (see iii. 31); the account of Othniel (iii. 7-11) was composed by the Deuteronomic editor; Tola (x. 2), Jair (x. 3), Ibzan (xii. 9), Elon (xii. 11), and Abdon (xii. 14) were men whose influential position was known from their tombs, but of whom no deeds are recorded. The great body of the section is occupied with the record (taken from an earlier work) of the deeds of six men, four of whom—Ehud, Barak (with Deborah), Gideon and Jephthah—saved their tribes from oppressors; while Abimelech did not save any one, but his deeds are incorporated in the book because he was a son of Gideon and established a kingdom of his own in Central Palestine; and the popular stories of Samson are introduced apparently because his wild deeds harassed an enemy of the Southern Hebrews. (For further details see Introduction, and notes to each story.)

iii. 7-11. *Othniel.* An examination of these verses shows that they contain the usual Deuteronomic writer's formula—Israel's sin, Yahweh's anger and punishment, the people's repentance, the appearance of a deliverer and consequent rest of the land for a term of years, the death of the judge. In the other stories of the greater judges the formula is the setting for traditions derived from older sources, but here we have nothing else but the names Othniel and Cushan-rishathaim, king of Aram. Apparently there were no traditions extant as to the deeds of Othniel, and he was introduced here to give Judah a 'judge.'

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DAN (Tell el Kādy)

the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served the Baalim and the Asheroth. Therefore the 8
anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years. And when the children of Israel 9
cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a saviour to the children of Israel, who saved them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the spirit of 10
the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel; and he went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand: and his hand prevailed against Cushan-rishathaim. And the land 11
had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Whether the invasion of the Aramaeans (who lived far away in the north) and their defeat by Othniel are historical or not, we cannot tell in the present state of our knowledge of the history of this period.

7. See ii. 11-22, especially ii. 13.

Asheroth are usually sacred trees or posts near an altar. Here, however, the word is the plural of the name of a goddess, 'Asherah,' who appears in inscriptions of Cyprus as a tree-goddess (so also in 1 Kings xviii. 19; 2 Kings xxiii. 4).

8. Cushan-rishathaim in its Hebrew form means 'Ethiopian of double wickedness,' and must be either a Hebrew perversion of a foreign name, or it is a descriptive term used of a king whose name has not been handed down.

Mesopotamia (in Hebrew, *Aram-naharaim*) is mentioned as Naharin in Egyptian inscriptions, and is the part of North Syria west of the Euphrates.

9. Othniel the son of Kenaz. See i. 13.

10. the spirit of the LORD came upon him. To the spirit of Yahweh is attributed in the O. T. whatever seems to be above the power of man, whether physical or spiritual, whether good or bad. Poetic, prophetic, artistic skill are due to its influence. Madness is caused by it. In this book it is used of purely physical force in the story of Samson (xiv. 6, 19, xv. 14), and of superhuman courage in great difficulties (here and in vi. 34, xi. 29).

judged: used here in the sense of 'delivered.'

11. forty years: i. e. a generation. See Introduction.

12 And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had
13 done that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek; and he went and smote Israel, and they

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iii. 12–30. *Ehud of Benjamin.* When the Hebrews crossed the Jordan, leaving only a few of their number east of that river, the peoples who had been in part dislodged by them began to return, and even pushed across the river in their wake. One of the first results was the capture of Jericho, which was now no longer the centre of Hebrew life, but only an outlying city of Benjamin. Yet it was an important place, for it commanded the roads from the Jordan to the hill-country of the south and centre of Palestine; and Eglon, king of Moab, who with the help of the Ammonites and Amalekites had captured it, was able to oppress the Hebrews for eighteen years, or nearly half a generation. These were delivered by the assassination of Eglon. Ehud, a man of Benjamin, was sent with tribute to the Moabite king, and obtaining by stratagem a secret audience with him, killed him, escaped, and led an attack of Hebrews of the hill-country of Ephraim, who drove back the Moabites and secured rest for two generations.

The Deuteronomic framework is clear at the beginning in verses 12–15^{a} and at the end in verses 29, 30. What comes between is taken from the older work.

12. Eglon is unknown but for this incident. The name occurs several times as that of a place (six times in Joshua x, and in xii. 12, xv. 39), but not of a person.

Moab. A people inhabiting the country east of the Dead Sea. According to Num. xxi. 26, the Amorites had robbed them of their territory, north of the Arnon, just before the arrival of the Hebrews. In Judges xi. 18 the Arnon is looked upon as the north boundary of Moab. The Hebrews, having conquered the Amorites, allotted the old Moabite territory north of Arnon to Reuben, thus creating in Moab an unfriendly feeling which manifested itself continually in later history. Moab is mentioned in Egyptian inscriptions about 1300 B. C. Hebrew tradition considered the people akin to the Hebrews (Gen. xix. 37, &c.). An inscription of Mesha, king of Moab in the ninth century B. C., is now in Paris. The dealings of the Hebrews with the Moabites before they entered Palestine are recorded in Num. xxi—xxiii.

13. children of Ammon. See x. 7.

Amalek appears in Gen. xxxvi. 12 as an Edomite tribe. It

possessed the city of palm trees. And the children of 14
Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.
But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the 15
LORD raised them up a saviour, Ehud the son of Gera, the
Benjamite, a man left-handed: [J] and the children of
Israel sent a present by him unto Eglon the king of Moab.
And Ehud made him a sword which had two edges, of a 16
cubit length; and he girded it under his raiment upon
his right thigh. And he offered the present unto Eglon 17
king of Moab: now Eglon was a very fat man. And 18
when he had made an end of offering the present, he
sent away the people that bare the present. But he 19
himself turned back from the quarries that were by

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was nomadic, and wandered chiefly in the desert land north of Sinai, but is found also in many other districts. Some of its clans, as the Kenites (cf. i. 16), joined the Hebrews, but the majority were continually fighting against them. They are mentioned again in vi. 3, 33, vii. 12, x. 12 (v. 14).

the city of palm trees: i. e. Jericho, as in i. 16.

15. Ehud appears as a clan-name in 1 Chron. vii. 10.

Gera was a clan of Benjamin (see Gen. xlvi. 21; cf. 1 Chron. viii. 3 ff.). Another member of it appears in the time of David (2 Sam. xvi. 5, &c.).

a man left-handed: *lit.* 'lame in his right hand.' Owing to this he carried his sword on his right thigh, where it was not looked for, and so escaped the notice of the king's guards. For left-handedness in Benjamin see xx. 16. (780)

a present: here, as in 2 Sam. viii. 2, 6, means tribute.

16. a cubit is explained in the Talmud as the length of the fore-arm minus the fingers. The word used here is not found in any other part of the O. T.

upon his right thigh: so that he could draw it with his left hand.

18, 19. Ehud sent away the carriers who had brought the tribute, he himself accompanying them a short distance and then returning.

19. the quarries: or 'graven images' (R. V. marg.), or 'carved stones,' probably a part of an ancient place of worship. The name **Gilgal** seems to mean a sacred circle of stones. Such circles have been found still existing in Palestine (see the reports

Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O
king. And he said, Keep silence. And all that stood
20 by him went out from him. And Ehud came unto him;
and he was sitting by himself alone in his summer
parlour. And Ehud said, I have a message from God
21 unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. And Ehud
put forth his left hand, and took the sword from his
22 right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: and the haft
also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon
the blade, for he drew not the sword out of his belly;
23 and it came out behind. Then Ehud went forth into
the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him,

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of the Palestine Exploration Fund, also Conder, *Syrian Stone Lore*, and *Heth and Moab*.

I have a secret errand unto thee, O king. This must be the message he sent in to the king by the servants. His own entrance is mentioned in the next verse.

and he (the king) **said, Keep silence:** i.e. leave me in privacy; then the courtiers left, and Ehud was introduced. The words 'unto thee, O king,' however, seem to indicate that Ehud was already in his presence, and it is possible that this account was taken by the editor from one of his sources, and the first part of the next verse from the same tradition (but differently worded) in the other.

20. summer parlour: R. V. marg. 'upper chamber of cooling,' i.e. the room on the flat roof common in the East. It must, however, be regarded as completely enclosed, as the officials evidently could not see from the outside that he was dead when they were anxious about him (verses 24 ff.).

he (the king) **arose out of his seat.** This may be out of respect to the message of the Hebrew God, or it may be closely connected with what follows, to show how Ehud got an opportunity to kill him.

22. The last sentence of this verse is unintelligible as it stands. Neither the text nor the marginal readings are probable.

23. The word translated **porch** is utterly unknown. It evidently means something connected with the exit—porch, staircase, vestibule, or the like.

the doors of the parlour: i.e. the two wings of the door, as in xvi. 3.

and locked them. Now when he was gone out, his 24
servants came; and they saw, and, behold, the doors of
the parlour were locked; and they said, Surely he
covereth his feet in his summer chamber. And they 25
tarried till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened
not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took the
key, and opened *them*: and, behold, their lord was
fallen down dead on the earth. And Ehud escaped 26
while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and
escaped unto Seirah. And it came to pass, when he 27
was come, that he blew a trumpet in the hill country of
Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him
from the hill country, and he before them. And he said 28
unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered
your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they
went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan

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24. he covereth his feet: a euphemism. 'No doubt, he is relieving himself in the cabinet of the cool chamber.'

25. till they were ashamed: at their wits' end, not being able to account for this long seclusion.

26. From the way in which the 'carved stones' ('quarries' in the English version) are mentioned here and in verse 19, it seems as if they were on the boundary beyond which one was out of the territory in actual possession of the Moabites. The form of the Hebrew sentences suggests that Ehud reached this boundary before the officials discovered that their king had been assassinated, and then was able to get to Seirah (where he was probably safe for the time).

The site of **Seirah** is unknown, but would naturally be on the eastern side of the hill-country of Ephraim.

27, 28. When Ehud came to Seirah he gave the signal for fighting (**blew a trumpet,** as in vi. 34), and his fellow tribesmen in the hill-country followed him as he led them down to the plains of the Jordan valley, when they learned what he had done.

27. the hill country of Ephraim: see ii. 9.

28. Follow after me. The Hebrew reads 'Pursue after me,' but the Greek version 'Come down after me' is better, and agrees with the latter part of the verse 'and they went down after him.'

the fords of Jordan against the Moabites: or R. V. marg.,

against the Moabites, and suffered not a man to pass
29 over. [D] And they smote of Moab at that time about ten
thousand men, every lusty man, and every man of valour;
30 and there escaped not a man. So Moab was subdued
that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had
rest fourscore years.

31 [A] And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath,
which smote of the Philistines six hundred men with
an ox goad: and he also saved Israel.

'toward Moab.' The meaning given in the text seems more in accordance with the use of the same phrase in vii. 24 and xii. 5.

29. The numbers are, as usual, large, and intended for effect, not for accuracy. The number **ten thousand** occurs again in i. 4, iv. 6, vii. 3, xx. 34.

every lusty man, and every man of valour: all (of them) vigorous and valiant men.

iii. 31. *Shamgar.* In this verse we have the first of the so-called 'minor judges' (the others are Tola in x. 2, Jair in x. 3, Ibzan in xii. 9, Elon in xii. 11, Abdon in xii. 14). The Deuteronomic formula is absent from the accounts of these men. The others are brought into the chronological scheme of the book, but here there is no chronology. It is most probable that his name, taken from v. 6, was introduced later than the Deuteronomic compilation to make up the number of twelve Israelitish heroes to correspond with the number of the tribes, since Abimelech was not regarded as worthy to be counted a judge.

31. Shamgar the son of Anath. The first name is not Hebrew, but resembles a Hittite name 'Sangar,' which occurs in Assyrian inscriptions of the ninth century B. C. The second is that of a Canaanite goddess, of whom there is a representation on an Egyptian monument in the British Museum.

the Philistines. See iii. 3 and chapter xiv.

an ox goad as used in Syria to-day is a long stick with a blade at one end for cleaning the ploughshare, and often a spike at the other for pricking the animal drawing the plough.

Similar stories are told of Samson (Judges xv. 15) and of Shammah ben Agee (in 2 Sam. xxiii. 11 ff.). It may be that the act of this latter, owing to similarity of name, has been transferred to Shamgar, who was only known from the mention of his name in the Song of Deborah, where he is certainly not represented as having 'saved Israel.'

[D] And the children of Israel again did that which was 4
evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead. And 2
the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of
Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose
host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the
Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the 3

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iv–v. *Deborah and Barak.* The Deuteronomic formula here is contained in iv. 1–3, 23, 24, v. 31^{b}. The rest is taken from the older book. The compiler of this older work had as usual (see Introd.) two accounts of the same events before him, but as one is in prose and the other in verse, he has not blended them into one story, but given first the prose version then the poetical, connecting the two by the words in v. 1.

iv. 1–24. *Prose story of Barak.* Jabin, a Canaanite king in Hazor, oppresses the Hebrews for twenty years, until Deborah a prophetess incites Barak of Naphtali to rouse the Hebrews to fight for their freedom. He gathers his army at Tabor, and Sisera the general of Jabin, who has his troops in Harosheth, advances to the river Kishon. Barak comes down from Tabor to the plain of Esdraelon and defeats Sisera, who, as he flees on foot, is invited to rest in the tent of Jael, the wife of a friendly Kenite chief, and while asleep is murdered by her. From the day of this battle the Hebrews gradually prevail more and more against Jabin, until at last they utterly destroy his power.

iv. 1–3. *The author's introduction as to other stories (see Introd.).*

1. when Ehud was dead. The story of Barak is thus directly connected with that of Ehud, the mention of Shamgar having been introduced later.

2. Jabin king of Canaan. The general term Canaan is used here instead of Hazor (see Joshua xi. 1–5 and verse 17 here), just as Judah is put for Caleb in i. 11, and 'children of Israel' is used continually in this book instead of the name of the particular tribe concerned. According to Joshua xi. 1–13 Jabin was defeated by Joshua and Hazor burned.

Hazor is mentioned in an Egyptian papyrus, now in the British Museum, and in the Amarna letters. The exact site is not known, but it was apparently near Kedesh-Naphtali, with which city it is mentioned in Joshua xix. 36; 2 Kings xv. 29.

Sisera. This name occurs again only in the lists of Nethinim (Ezra ii. 53; Neh. vii. 55), who were probably foreigners.

Harosheth of the Gentiles, i. e. Harosheth of the nations or foreigners, thus distinguished probably from a Hebrew Harosheth (cf. Isa. ix. 1), is identified with the present el-Ḥārathīyeh on the

LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and
twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.
4 **[J]** Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth,
5 she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under
the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el
in the hill country of Ephraim: and the children of
6 Israel came up to her for judgement. And she sent
and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-

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north side of the Kishon, not far from Megiddo, though some would place it near the Huleh ('waters of Merom'). Chariots would be of more use in the former site.

3. chariots of iron. Judging by the representations on Egyptian and Assyrian monuments, these were probably two-wheeled vehicles of wood, open behind, with fittings and ornaments of iron. Each carried a driver, a fighter, and a shield-bearer. As the plains (Esdraelon, Sharon, &c.) were the key of Palestine, the possession of chariots by the Canaanites was long a hindrance to the full occupation of the land by the Hebrews. David captured many of them, and Solomon adopted them for his own army.

4. Deborah ('a bee') is called a prophetess, not in any technical sense but as in the case of Miriam (Exod. xv. 20), because she was inspired by Yahweh.

she judged Israel, i. e. sat as arbitrator in disputes. As there were no courts, it was the custom to bring disputes to some person renowned for wisdom. The decisions of the 'judge' were enforced by the power of public opinion. The title 'judge' in the usual sense of this book ('deliverer') belongs to Barak.

5. dwelt (better, as in marg. 'sat') **under the palm tree of Deborah,** for arbitrating, as was customary in early days among many peoples. In cities these meetings for justice were held in the city-gate.

It is curious that a tradition in Gen. xxxv. 8 knows of a sacred tree in this same neighbourhood, associated with the memory of Deborah the nurse of Rebekah. It is possible that the writer of this verse confused the two persons of the same name. The Deborah of Judges apparently belonged to Issachar (v. 15), and verses 6-9 seem to indicate that she lived in the north near Kedesh, not in the south.

Ramah (the present er-Ram), five miles north of Jerusalem, and about six from Beth-el.

Beth-el, see i. 23.

6. Barak ('a flash of lightning') is mentioned only in this story, unless the Greek and Syriac translations are right in 1 Sam. xii. 11

naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord, the
God of Israel, commanded, *saying*, Go and draw unto
mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of
the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?
And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the 7
captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude;
and I will deliver him into thine hand. And 8
Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I
will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go.
And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding 9
the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour;
for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.
And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.
And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to 10
Kedesh; and there went up ten thousand men at his
feet: and Deborah went up with him. Now Heber the 11
Kenite had severed himself from the Kenites, even from

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in reading 'Barak' instead of the Hebrew 'Bedan.' The name occurs in Carthaginian as 'Barkas,' and in the inscriptions of Palmyra and South Arabia.

Kedesh-naphtali, now Kades, about four miles from the entrance of the Jordan into the Huleh ('waters of Merom').

mount Tabor: the conical hill with a flat top at the north-east end of the plain of Esdraelon. It is now called Jebel et-Tōr, and its summit is 1,843 feet above sea-level.

children of Naphtali and . . . children of Zebulun. The two tribes settled in the country west of the Sea of Galilee. The omission here (as in ch. i.) of Issachar, in whose territory all the fighting takes place, seems to show that having for its lot the plain where the Canaanites were too strong to be conquered, they had become absorbed in other tribes before this story was written. In the older poetical account (v. 15) they are mentioned.

7. the river Kishon: see v. 21.

10. there went up, evidently to Tabor in accordance with Deborah's instructions. (See verse 12.)

11. A very awkward introduction here of information necessary for the events in verses 17 ff.

the Kenites: 'Kain' in the marg. is the name of the ancestor put for the tribe, as in Num. xxiv. 22. For Kenites see i. 16.

the children of Hobab the brother in law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far as the oak in Zaanannim,
12 which is by Kedesh. And they told Sisera that Barak
13 the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles, unto the river
14 Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand
15 men after him. And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera lighted down from his
16 chariot, and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued

Hobab the brother in law of Moses, translated correctly in margin 'father in law,' the Hebrew word meaning 'the wife's father.' Hobab is mentioned in only one other passage—Num. x. 29 (but see on Judges i. 16); in other places Moses' father-in-law is called Jethro. What the connexion between these two names is we cannot tell.

the oak in Zaanannim: another of the sacred trees. The proper name is uncertain, but probably was (as in R. V. margin of Joshua xix. 33) Bezaanannim.

iv. 12–16. *The battle.* Sisera, hearing that Barak was at Mount Tabor, brought his army with his nine hundred chariots down to the Kishon. Barak advanced with his ten thousand men. Yahweh fought for Israel, the enemies were discomfited, Sisera fled on foot. Barak pursued the remnant of the army and chariots to Harosheth and annihilated them. Such is our scanty information as to this great battle.

It is impossible to say in what part of the plain the armies met. Sisera would reach the Kishon, coming from Harosheth, some sixteen miles from Tabor. He probably turned northwards towards the mount, and the scene of battle was slowly but surely transferred nearer to the river again, as the Hebrews pressed upon their enemy.

15. the LORD discomfited Sisera: probably an allusion to the events mentioned in v. 20–22.

after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of
the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell by the edge
of the sword; there was not a man left.

Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael 17
the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace
between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber
the Kenite. And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said 18
unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not.
And he turned in unto her into the tent, and she
covered him with a rug. And he said unto her, Give 19
me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.
And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink,
and covered him. And he said unto her, Stand in the 20
door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth
come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man
here? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael Heber's wife 21
took a tent-pin, and took an hammer in her hand,
and went softly unto him, and smote the pin into his
temples, and it pierced through into the ground; for he
was in a deep sleep; so he swooned and died. And, 22
behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet
him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the

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iv. 17–23. *Sisera's flight and death.*

17. Sisera, seeing that all was lost, fled himself northwards towards Kedesh, and came across the encampment of the Heberites who at that time were wandering in the district. These had taken no part in the fighting.

18. a rug: perhaps rather 'tent-curtain.'

19. a bottle of milk: i. e. the goat-skin in which milk was kept.

21. Women generally drive in the tent-pins when camp is pitched.

In the Song (v. 26 f.) Sisera is killed as he stands.

22. Verse 16 certainly gives the impression that Barak led the pursuit of the Canaanite army to Harosheth. If this be so, it could only be two or three days after the battle that he arrived at Jael's tent. Our uncertainty, however, as to the identity of some

man whom thou seekest. And he came unto her; and,
behold, Sisera lay dead, and the tent-pin was in his
23 temples. [D] So God subdued on that day Jabin the king
24 of Canaan before the children of Israel. And the hand
of the children of Israel prevailed more and more against
Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin
king of Canaan.

5 [J] Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam
on that day, saying,

---

of the places mentioned in the story is so great that we cannot be sure of this.

24. The defeat of Sisera was the beginning of a series of victories by the Hebrews over Jabin. The later successes are not detailed, for the story of Barak the 'judge' has been told.

v. *The Song of deliverance.* The song that follows is recognized by almost all scholars as one of the earliest pieces of Hebrew literature in the O. T. Such songs have existed in early English literature as well as in Hebrew. Doubtless in Palestine, as in England, they were sung at feasts and tribal gatherings. Collections of Hebrew poetry seem to have been made by the Hebrews. David commanded that the people should be taught (to recite) the lament he composed on the death of Saul and Jonathan, and the compiler of the Book of Samuel found it written in a work called 'the Book of Jashar' (2 Sam. i. 18). A fragment of poetry from the same book is quoted in Joshua x. 12, 13, and another in 1 Kings viii. 12, 13 (according to the Greek version). Other specimens of this poetry are to be found in Num. xxi, one being quoted from another collection of songs called 'the book of the Wars of Yahweh' (verses 14, 15). Such songs were doubtless passed on orally long before they were written down. Unfortunately the antiquity of the song has made it very difficult to understand. Many old words pass out of use altogether and their meaning is forgotten, others change their meaning, the forms used in inflections change. The consequence here is that an enormous literature has grown up around the interpretation of the song, and in spite of much ingenuity thus brought to bear on its meaning we must often confess we cannot translate parts.

As regards the contents, it is clear that it records the same events as those of which a prose account is given in ch. iv; but with some striking differences. The difference between such a song as has been described above and a prose narrative, which

For that the leaders took the lead in Israel, 2

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is more of the nature of a chronicle, is sufficient to account for a difference of emphasis on certain events. But there still remain to be explained the following variations, which seem to indicate different traditions. (1) The entire omission in the song of any reference to Jabin, King of Hazor, and the presentation of Sisera, not as a general, but as himself a king (verses 19, 20). (2) Here Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh, Zebulun and Issachar take part in the battle, while Reuben, Gad, Dan, and Asher are blamed because they did not come; while in the prose story Zebulun and Naphtali only are called (iv. 10). (3) In the song Jael strikes Sisera as he drinks, and he falls dead; in iv. 21 she kills him as he lies asleep.

The authorship of such early songs is often unknown, and such is the case here. It has been ascribed to Deborah on account of verse 7, which the English version translates 'I Deborah arose,' whereas if translated as ancient Hebrew it should be 'thou Deborah didst arise.'

So far as form is concerned, it consists of several descriptive scenes most graphic and vigorous, and three apostrophes. The latter are in verses 2–3, 9–10 (and 11 ?), and 31. The scenes are verses 4–5, Yahweh's march up to Palestine; 6-8, the miserable state to which the Hebrews had been reduced; 12–18, the conduct of the Hebrew tribes when Deborah and Barak sought to rouse them to action; 19–22, the battle; 25-27, the death of Sisera; 28–30, the home of Sisera and the hopes of his mother and her princesses. To these should be added the curse of Meroz (verse 23) and the contrasting blessing of Jael (24).

v. 2, 3. *Apostrophe.*

2. The first two Hebrew words are translated by the English version **For that the leaders took the lead,** in accordance with one of the Greek versions. This can only be supported by the fact that there is a noun from the same root in Arabic meaning 'head of a people,' and a verb meaning 'to ascend.' On the other hand, the Hebrew noun in the other passages of the O. T. where it occurs (Deut. xxxii. 42; Num. vi. 5; Ezek. xliv. 20) means 'long hair' or 'locks,' and the verb 'to loosen, free from restraint' (Lev. x. 6, xxi. 10; Exod. xxxii. 25, &c.). The preposition at the beginning is not used to indicate that for which one blesses, but means 'by, with,' or indicates time. The alternatives therefore are 'by the loosing of long hair . . . bless Yahweh,' or 'when long hair is loosed,' &c., and the words allude probably to the vows made to Yahweh (cf. as above Num. vi. 5) for victory. The translation in the A. V. 'for the avenging of Israel' agrees with the Syriac rendering and the Targum, but the early Hebrew words never have this meaning.

For that the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye the LORD.
3 Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, *even* I, will sing unto the LORD;
I will sing praise to the LORD, the God of Israel.
4 LORD, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,

In the second part of the verse there is the same ambiguity in the use of the preposition as above.

For that the people offered themselves willingly may also be rendered 'when the people offer free-will offerings,' or 'by the offering of the people,' &c.

3. Not only shall the Israelites bless Yahweh, but kings and rulers (especially those who had fought against them, verse 19) shall hear and note that Israel praises Yahweh its God for the victory. At a later time the prophet calls on a larger audience ('Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth,' Isa. i. 2) to witness the ingratitude of Israel to Yahweh.

Hear . . . give ear: a frequent parallelism in poetry (Gen. iv. 23; Num. xxiii. 18, &c.).

Kings and **princes** (as 'rulers') also occur together in Ps. ii. 2; Prov. viii. 15, xxxi. 4; Hab. i. 10.

I, even **I.** The repetition of the pronoun is very emphatic. 'I for my part.' Some interpreters refer it not to the author, but as in some psalms to the people, Israel.

The word used for **will sing** here is not the same as in verse 1, but refers rather to the melody than the words.

the Lord, the God of Israel. The one fact that in the time of Samuel and David made a united kingdom possible was that all the Hebrew tribes acknowledged Yahweh as their God. In the time of the Judges, however, this was not sufficient to do more than induce some of the tribes to act together for the time in repelling a common enemy.

v. 4, 5. *The approach of Yahweh.* We are so accustomed to think of Yahweh as the God of Israel that we may overlook the fact that according to Exod. vi. 3 (cf. iii. 13 ff.) the Hebrews had never known their God by this name until just before they left Egypt. The revelation of Yahweh to Moses came when he was among the Midianites, sojourning in the peninsula of Sinai; the law was given by Yahweh later, from His seat on Mount Sinai (or Horeb); and as a deity He was associated with a particular land; it was still in Sinai that He remained until His people had secured their new land in Palestine and Yahweh's seat was transferred to

When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
The mountains flowed down at the presence of the 5
LORD,
Even yon Sinai at the presence of the LORD, the
God of Israel.

---

the hill of Zion. But this was not yet. The Angel of Yahweh was with the Hebrews, and the ark was the visible sign of His presence. Long after this time Elijah retreated from the evil of his country to 'Horeb, the mount of God,' and there met Yahweh (1 Kings xix. 8 ff.).

The poet in these verses tells how Yahweh marched out from His distant abode to come and stand by His people in battle, and in few but vigorous sentences describes the awe of nature as He passes.

4. **when thou wentest forth** to battle, as in ii. 15, iv. 14. This verb is coupled with the next (**thou marchedst out**), also in Hab. iii. 12, 13; Ps. lxviii. 7.

Seir, sometimes called the 'hill-country of Seir,' is the mountainous district on the east side of a line drawn from the south end of the Dead Sea to the head of the Gulf of 'Aqabah. According to Gen. xxxvi. 8 it was the abode of Esau (cf. Deut. ii. 5), who succeeded the Horites (Gen. xiv. 6; Deut. ii. 12).

the field (or 'territory') **of Edom** is the same as Seir; cf. Gen. xxxvi. 8, 9.

the heavens also dropped, or dripped. A Greek translation suggests an original verb meaning 'was shaken,' which would be very natural, for in those days the heaven was regarded as a solid covering for the earth, and the figure would be similar to that in 2 Sam. xxii. 8.

5. **the mountains flowed down,** or 'quaked' (marg.). Both meanings come from the same consonants in the Hebrew verb, but require different vowels. It is impossible to tell now which was the original. It seems, however, natural that the solid bodies, earth, heaven, and mountains, should shake in awe, while the clouds should fall as water.

Even yon Sinai: literally 'this Sinai,' or 'this is Sinai.' In the former sense it is unusual, though possible as equivalent to 'yon Sinai.' If the second and more usual sense is taken the words are probably a note introduced into the text. The words are found in Ps. lxviii. 8, but the text there is doubtful.

6 In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, the high ways were unoccupied,
And the travellers walked through byways.
7 The rulers ceased in Israel, they ceased,

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v. 6-8. *The wretchedness of the Hebrews.* In the days before Deborah stirred them to battle existence had been made almost intolerable for the Hebrews. We have learned from ch. i that between and among the tribal settlements were Canaanite cities unconquered, hence communication with one another was difficult at any time, and had now become almost impossible, because the kings (verse 19) of these cities conspired to occupy the roads against them. Caravans ceased, foot-passengers dared not travel on the beaten tracks, but were compelled to make their way along dangerous and devious paths. Unwalled settlements were exposed to atttacks which they could not repel, and so were abandoned or destroyed, provisions for the peasants failed, and though there were many stout men among them, they dared not show a weapon in their own defence.

6. Why are **Shamgar the son of Anath** and **Jael** mentioned here? Of the former we know nothing at all. He was made one of the judges centuries later by an author who probably took him to be referred to as such in this passage. The deeds ascribed to him in iii. 31 seem to belong rightly to another man, of a somewhat similar name (see note to iii. 31). Of Jael we know that she was not a Hebrew but a Kenite, belonging to a family that had severed itself from the clan in the south (iv. 11), and that her husband's house was at peace with the deadly enemy of the Hebrews (iv. 17), although she proved treacherous to her friendship, and by killing her guest earned the enthusiastic gratitude of Israel. If Shamgar and Jael were the causes of Israel's wretchedness now described the reference would be intelligible, but there is no certainty possible for want of information.

the high ways were unoccupied, or as in the margin, 'the caravans ceased.' The difference between the two translations is due to the different vocalization of the consonants of the first word by the Hebrew and the Greek versions. The marginal rendering has the advantage that it gives the natural sense of the verb, which has to be strained to bear the meaning in the text. Caravans were compelled to keep to the main tracks on their way from one place to another, and as these were beset by enemies they ceased to go at all. Wayfarers were compelled to abandon the usual roads and make their way by crooked or roundabout paths.

7. The rulers ceased in Israel, or as in margin, 'The villages

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MOUNT TABOR

Until that I Deborah arose,
That I arose a mother in Israel.
They chose new gods; 8
Then was war in the gates:
Was there a shield or spear seen
Among forty thousand in Israel?
My heart is toward the governors of Israel, 9
That offered themselves willingly among the people:

---

were unoccupied.' The noun in this sentence is found only here and in verse 11, but its root is the same as that in two known words referring to hamlets. As it stands it may mean 'peasantry.' A change of the last letter would give the meaning 'villages' or 'hamlets' adopted in the R. V. margin. The meaning 'rulers,' adopted in the text, is taken from the Greek version. (See also verse 11.)

Until that I . . . arose. There is ambiguity here, because if the form of the Hebrew verb is archaic, it means, 'thou (fem.) didst arise'; if later, it means 'I arose.' The former is more probable (cf. verse 12). The Greek version has 'until Deborah arose.'

8. The first line is literally 'It chooses new gods,' and is difficult to explain grammatically. The Latin version has 'God chose new wars.' Very many suggestions have been given from the earliest times as to the probable text and meaning, but none are satisfactory.

Then was war in the gates. This is an attempt to translate the Hebrew words, which simply mean 'Then bread gates.' The text is clearly corrupt, and one can only conjecture what it was originally. The most tempting solution offered is that the last letter of the first Hebrew word was accidentally dropped (owing to the fact that the next word began with the same letter), and that the last word is wrongly vowelled. This would give the meaning 'The barley-bread failed,' i. e. the common food of the country people was exhausted (cf. 1 Sam. ix. 7).

The third line is negative: 'Shield was not seen, nor spear.'

v. 9-11. *A second Apostrophe.* After describing the misery of the people, and before reciting the movement that led to relief, the poet breaks out again in gratitude to Yahweh. As in verses 2 and 3, first the Hebrews are called upon to bless Yahweh, and then the other peoples to take notice. Verse 11 is not intelligible enough to say with certainty to whom it is addressed.

9. In the second line the Hebrew participle may mean 'Who

Bless ye the LORD.
10 Tell *of it*, ye that ride on white asses,
Ye that sit on rich carpets,
And ye that walk by the way.
11 Far from the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water,
There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD,
Even the righteous acts of his rule in Israel.
Then the people of the LORD went down to the gates.
12 Awake, awake, Deborah;

---

offer themselves,' &c., referring to the 'governors of Israel,' or 'You, who offer yourselves . . . bless Yahweh.' The verb is the same as in verse 2^{b}, and may also mean 'who bring free-will offerings.'

10. The literal rendering of this verse is:—

'You, who ride upon tawny she-asses,
You, who sit upon cloths (?),
And who walk on (the) road, meditate.'

The first line refers to men of wealth (cf. x. 4, xii. 14).

In the second line the meaning 'cloths' is the most probable, and the sentence might be paraphrased in English, 'You who sit on cushions'; it is thus a parallel to the first line. The translation of the A. V., 'Ye, that sit in judgment,' follows the Greek and Latin versions in giving different vowels to the last Hebrew word, and is improbable.

meditate. This is the usual meaning of the word. Some translate 'sing,' which is possible, but supposes that those addressed are Israelites. But the Israelites are represented in the song as being utterly destitute at this time, and the address is more probably to their neighbours or enemies (as in verse 3).

11. This verse is unintelligible. The English version translates the Hebrew words, though **far from** is only 'from' in the original, and the word translated **his rule** is the same as in verse 7, where it meant 'villages.' The latter meaning is given in the margin here, but does not give any sense. The last line seems to refer to the assembling of the Hebrews to go out to battle, and thus to introduce verse 13.

v. 12–18. Another scene is now unfolded. Yahweh has been described as marching from Sinai to the help of His people.

Awake, awake, utter a song:
Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son
of Abinoam.
Then came down a remnant of the nobles *and* the 13
people;
The LORD came down for me against the mighty.
Out of Ephraim *came down* they whose root is in 14
Amalek;
After thee, Benjamin, among thy peoples;

Their wretched and helpless condition has been told. Now we are to learn of the stirring of a new spirit of courage and resolution, which begins with Deborah and Barak, and runs like fire through the Hebrew tribes—yet not through all. Stinging words will tell that Reuben loved his sheep better than his brother Hebrews, and Gilead, Dan, and Asher are branded as defaulters. But Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh did well; Zebulun and Naphtali were even more distinguished in their service.

Such is the sense of the following passage, but a glance at the alternative readings given in the margin of the R. V. shows how badly the Hebrew original has suffered in its transmission during the centuries. Indeed, in verses 13 to 15 it is impossible to do more than record some of the suggestions given by the early versions.

12. The first movement of the new courage is in Deborah and Barak. The poet begins his description in the form of exhortation. It is a poetic violence to language, which more than justifies itself by the vivid effect it produces.

lead thy captivity captive: i. e. thy captives, or, assuming another pronunciation of the Hebrew word, 'thy captors.'

13. The text as it is vowelled and punctuated in the Hebrew Bible is untranslateable. Many attempts have been made to get sense with the least possible change. One of the simplest is to read:—

'Then came down a remnant of the nobles;
The people of Yahweh came down for Him as heroes.'

The punctuation is here in accord with the Greek version.

14. The first line is 'From Ephraim, their root (is) in Amalek.' A verb is wanting here. The Greek version translated 'Ephraim rooted them out in Amalek,' or 'in the valley.'

In the second line a Greek MS. suggests 'Thy brother Benjamin among thy peoples.' In these two lines nothing is certain except the names of the two tribes.

Out of Machir came down governors,
And out of Zebulun they that handle the marshal's staff.
15 And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah;
As was Issachar, so was Barak;
Into the valley they rushed forth at his feet.
By the watercourses of Reuben
There were great resolves of heart.
16 Why satest thou among the sheepfolds,

Machir is a clan of Manasseh (Joshua xvii. 1 f. (J); Num. xxvi. 29 (P)), and here is evidently that part which was settled west of the Jordan. As, however, Machir is mentioned in many passages as occupying Gilead and Bashan, and in genealogical lists is made the 'father of Gilead' (Joshua xvii. 1), it is probable that it crossed the Jordan and conquered this territory at a later time.

governors: or 'lawgivers' (margin). The Hebrew word so translated occurs also in Num. xxi. 18, where it is rendered 'sceptre' in the text, 'the lawgiver' in the margin. It seems to mean literally 'one who carries a staff' (as a sign of his authority).

they that handle the marshal's staff: or 'the staff of the scribe' (margin). The marginal translation is the literal and correct one. The 'scribe' in the army, according to 2 Kings xxv. 19, was the officer who mustered the men.

15. The Hebrew text may be translated literally:—

'And my princes in Issachar with Deborah,
And Issachar, thus Barak
Into the valley was cast at his feet.
In the divisions of Reuben great were the resolves of heart.'

In the R. V. the first line agrees with the Latin version, while the Greek adds 'and Barak' after Deborah. Neither Greek nor Latin has any mention of Issachar in the second line. The Latin in the second line has 'And they (the princes) followed in the footsteps of Barak.' We have no certainty as to the original text. Owing to this uncertainty we cannot tell what the subject of the verb in the third line is (the pronoun 'his' must refer to 'Barak'), but it is generally interpreted to mean that the princes of Issachar rushed to his help.

the watercourses: or channels. The word seems better in its more original meaning, 'divisions, sections' (see next verse).

16. the sheepfolds: as in Gen. xlix. 14, Ps. lxviii. 13, but the meaning is not quite certain.

To hear the pipings for the flocks?
At the watercourses of Reuben
There were great searchings of heart.
Gilead abode beyond Jordan: 17
And Dan, why did he remain in ships?
Asher sat still at the haven of the sea,
And abode by his creeks.
Zebulun was a people that jeoparded their lives 18
 unto the death,
And Naphtali, upon the high places of the field.

---

the pipings for the flocks refers to the sounds made by the shepherds to call the flocks. (See Isa. v. 26, vii. 18, where the verb is translated 'hiss.')

The last two lines of the verse are as in verse 15, except that we have here '*To* the divisions,' &c., equivalent to 'The divisions of Reuben had'; and we have 'searchings' for 'resolves.' As the two Hebrew words differ in one letter only it is possible that we should read 'searchings' in verse 15 also.

17. Gilead must be used here for Gad. For the general use of the name see x. 4.

And Dan, why did he remain in ships? The verb indicates that the Danites were living among another people (cf. xvii. 7, 8, 9); the word 'ships' indicates these as a seafaring people. One is led therefore to suppose that the migration of ch. xviii had already taken place, and that the Danites of Laish had entered into relation with the Phoenicians, who were the great seafarers of the time.

'Asher sat near (or, 'in the direction of') the seashore,
And at his landing-place was living at rest.'

Asher was not able to take the towns on the shore (i. 31), but was not far from it.

The same words as here, 'near the seashore,' are used in Gen. xlix. 13 of Zebulun, whose territory was further inland.

The word translated **creeks** is found here only. The English translation is suggested by the Greek version; the Latin has 'harbours,' but the kindred word in Arabic means places where ships are drawn up for unloading.

18. 'Zebulun was a people that despised its life to the death,' i. e. was reckless of life in battle; 'and Naphtali (showed like courage) on the high (and exposed) places of open country.'

19 The kings came and fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo:
They took no gain of money.
20 They fought from heaven,
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
21 The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.

---

v. 19–22. *The Battle.* The kings of Canaan came to Taanach, and there the battle was fought. It was decided not alone by the courage of the Hebrews, but by the fact that the stars used their influence in sending down the rain, which flooded the Kishon, making the chariots useless and thus securing victory for the Hebrews.

19. the kings of Canaan: for there were many kings in Canaan, each ruling over a city and its district. Sisera was the one who had been appointed leader in the battle.

Taanach and **Megiddo.** See i. 27.

They took no gain of money. Battles were usually fought for booty (cf. verse 30). This time their fighting was fruitless.

20. 'From heaven fought the stars,
From their courses they fought with Sisera.'

The English version follows the Hebrew in putting a stop after 'fought,' instead of after 'stars.' The heavenly bodies that rule the seasons and weather helped the Hebrews against Sisera by flooding the Kishon.

21. The river Kishon is the second river in Palestine, and from the furthest of its sources to the sea is thirty-five miles long. With its tributary streams, which are small but numerous, it drains the plain of Esdraelon and the sides near it of the hills surrounding. As a rule it is not deep nor wide, and is impassable in only one or two places. In the summer parts of it are quite dry. The mouth is usually blocked by a sand-bar, which is only broken through when the stream receives the violent rain which falls at certain seasons. In the winter, and even more in the spring, the sudden rains convert an insignificant stream into a torrent and the surrounding land into a marsh. This was the river Kishon that 'swept them away.'

That ancient river: *lit.* 'river of antiquity,' or, according to the Greek version, 'river of ancient (things or people).' But the Hebrew word is found here only, and is therefore at the mercy of commentators, who have given it a dozen different mean-

O my soul, march on with strength.
Then did the horsehoofs stamp 22
By reason of the pransings, the pransings of their
strong ones.
Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, 23
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;
Because they came not to the help of the LORD,
To the help of the LORD against the mighty.
Blessed above women shall Jael be, 24
The wife of Heber the Kenite,
Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
He asked water, *and* she gave him milk; 25

---

ings and proposed as many restorations of the text. The last line is unintelligible. 'Thou treadest, O my soul, strength' is the most literal translation of the Hebrew text, which is evidently out of place here.

22. 'Then smote horsehoofs (the ground)
From the galloping, the galloping of his mighty (steeds).'
Such is a literal translation of this verse. The omission of the object (given above in brackets) in the first line, and the doubtfulness of the meaning of the preposition 'from' in the second, seem to point again to an imperfect text. The word translated 'strong' is used of horses in Jer. viii. 16, xlvii. 3, l. 11. The pronoun 'his' has no word near it to refer to. It would be in place, however, if verse 22 came originally after verse 20. In that case the verse would naturally describe the charge in battle; in its present position it more probably refers to the confusion of flight.

v. 23. *The curse on Meroz.*

23. Meroz is quite unknown. As this curse is evidently a strong contrast to the blessing of Jael that follows, it is generally supposed that Meroz was a town or village which lay on the route of Sisera's flight, and that its inhabitants allowed him to pass by when they might have seized him.

against the mighty. Translate either, as in the margin, 'among the mighty,' or 'as mighty ones.'

24. *The blessing of Jael.* 'May Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite (cf. iv. 11), be the most blest of women, most blest of women who live in tents' (cf. Gen. iv. 20; Jer. xxxv. 7).

v. 25-27. *The death of Sisera.* Sisera is not mentioned by name until the middle of this scene, but every hearer of the song knows

She brought him butter in a lordly dish.
26 She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote
through his head,

---

who is meant. Nor is his flight mentioned. He appears suddenly standing at the entrance of the tent, simply asking as a guest water to drink. Soured milk is handed to him in a large bowl, and while he hides his face in it as he drinks, Jael, his hostess, strikes with a mallet a crushing blow on his temples. At her feet he totters and falls, and lies lifeless.

This representation of Sisera's death differs from that in the prose story (iv. 18-21). There Sisera lay down to rest under a covering, and as he slept Jael stole quietly to his side and smote the peg into his temples. The two traditions are here inconsistent. It is noticeable too that in the prose record the treachery of Jael is specially clear (iv. 17, 18), while it is naturally not mentioned in the song.

25. The narrative is given in short sharp sentences, as can be seen from a literal translation, maintaining the order of the Hebrew words:—

'Water he asked, milk she gave;
In a bowl of nobles she reached sour milk.
Her hand to the peg she was stretching,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer (?);
And she hammered Sisera, she crushed his head,
And she shattered and broke through his temple.
Before her feet he sank, he fell, he lay:
Before her feet he sank, he fell:
Where he sank, there he lay killed.'

butter in a lordly dish. The word translated 'butter' means milk which has been shaken up in the skin with enough fermenting remains of stale milk to make it sour. It is still the most refreshing drink among the Bedouin. The dish or bowl (as in vi. 38) was fit for nobles, that is, large.

26. the nail: or in margin 'tent-pin,' is a peg usually for fixing the tent-ropes, but also for hanging, for digging, or as a pin in weaving (cf. xvi. 14). Here it may mean the handle of the hammer, or be simply another name for the hammer itself = 'mallet.' The mention of a peg *and* a hammer here does not imply necessarily that two instruments were used, but is due to the parallelism in Hebrew poetry.

the workmen's hammer is perhaps the best translation, but the meaning is doubtful.

Yea, she pierced and struck through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay: 27
At her feet he bowed, he fell:
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.
Through the window she looked forth, and cried, 28
The mother of Sisera *cried* through the lattice,
Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
Her wise ladies answered her, 29
Yea, she returned answer to herself,
Have they not found, have they not divided the spoil? 30
A damsel, two damsels to every man;

---

27. The second line is repeated probably by a mistake in copying.

v. 28-30. The last scene is described in words of cruel irony. The hearer's thought is suddenly carried from Jael's tent to Sisera's home, where his mother begins to grow anxious for his return, but, at the suggestion of her attendants, she comforts herself with the thought of the booty he will bring when he comes.

28. and cried. This word occurs only here, and seems to mean 'to cry shrilly.' In late Hebrew it means 'to lament,' and in Aramaic 'to exult.'

the wheels: correctly in margin 'the steps,' that is, the sound of the horses' feet as the chariots return.

29. 'The wisest of her princesses answers her,
Moreover, she herself returns herself her words.'

The first line may be translated as above by a slight change of pronunciation of the first Hebrew word, or 'the wise of her princesses answer' (without object) by a similar change in the last word. Our English revised rendering would make the Hebrew sentence ungrammatical.

The meaning of the second line has been explained by scholars in two ways. (1) Sisera's mother, however, still repeated her words of anxiety to herself, in spite of the comforting suggestion of her princess; or (2) she answered her own anxious question in the same way as the princess, thinking herself that her son was delayed by the immense booty he had secured. The latter in the more probable view.

30. 'Do they not find, divide spoil?
Slave-maidens, two for each brave man?

To Sisera a spoil of divers colours,
A spoil of divers colours of embroidery,
Of divers colours of embroidery on both sides, on the necks of the spoil?
31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD:
But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.

[**D**] And the land had rest forty years.

6 And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into
2 the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of

Spoil of dyed stuffs for Sisera,
Spoil of dyed stuffs, coloured embroidery,
Dyed stuff, two pieces of coloured embroidery for the necks of booty (!).'

In the first line the Hebrew tenses denote an unfinished action. This is the cause of the delay of Sisera and his host—they are busy collecting and dividing the spoil. Then the imagination of the princess leads her to hazard a guess as to what that spoil is likely to be.

In the last line there is no question of 'embroidery on both sides,' as in the English translation; but of 'two pieces of embroidery,' as of 'two slave-maidens' above. The last two words do not make sense as they stand. Very slight changes in one or other of these words would give 'for my neck,' or 'for his neck as booty,' or 'for the neck of the queen,' but there is nothing to show what the original words were.

31. 'Thus shall perish all Thy enemies, Yahweh (cf. Ps. xcii. 9):
And those who love Him are as the going forth of the sun in his strength (cf. Ps. xix. 4-6).'

To the end of the song the editor adds the completing portion of what he began to say in iv. 23, 24: 'And the land had rest forty years,' i. e. a generation.

vi-viii. 32. *Gideon.*

vi. 1-6. *Introduction.* The usual formula appears here in verses 1 and 6, but is enlarged by the introduction into verses 2-5 of material taken from the source.

1. Midian was a nomad people. In Exod. iii the Midianites are in the south of the peninsula of Sinai; in 1 Kings xi. 18 they are in the north-east of the desert of Sinai; here and in other

Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of Midian the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and the caves, and the strong holds.
And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites 3
came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the
east; they came up against them; and they encamped 4
against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance in Israel,
neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with 5
their cattle and their tents, they came in as locusts for multitude; both they and their camels were without
number: and they came into the land to destroy it. And 6
Israel was brought very low because of Midian; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

---

passages (Gen. xxxvi. 35, &c.) they are to the east of the Hebrews. Hebrew tradition regarded them as kinsmen. According to Gen. xxv. 2, Midian was a son of Abraham by Keturah. Moses married a Midianitess, Exod. ii. 15–21. In viii. 24 of our book they are called Ishmaelites. It seems probable from the story in Exod. iii that they worshipped Yahweh before the Hebrews. They are not mentioned by name in the inscriptions of Egypt or Assyria; but Ephah, one of the sons of Midian (Gen. xxv. 4: cf. Isa. lx. 6), is identified by Delitzsch with Hayapa of the Assyrian inscriptions. These lived in the eighth century B.C., in the north of the Hijāz.

vi. 2–5. This description would apply almost equally well to the raids of the Bedouin to-day. There is no attempt at permanent conquest, but only at thievish depredations. Nomads prefer that settled peoples should do the work of sowing, while they reap the harvests. The comparison with locusts, which pass over a land, stripping it and leaving it bare, is apt. The temporary flight of the inhabitants to the hills and caves was repeated up to the time of the Maccabees, and is still common in Syria, in the Balkans, and elsewhere at the present time. The meaning of the word translated 'dens' is uncertain: probably it is explained by the word 'caves' which follows it.

3. the Amalekites. See iii. 13.

the children of the east: the tribes who lived east of Ammon and Moab.

4. till thou come unto Gaza: i. e. as far as Gaza, which, being a walled town (xvi. 3), checked them.

7 [J] And it came to pass, when the children of Israel
8 cried unto the LORD because of Midian, that the LORD
sent a prophet unto the children of Israel: and he said
unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, I
brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of
9 the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the
hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that
oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and
10 gave you their land; and I said unto you, I am the LORD
your God; ye shall not fear the gods of the Amorites, in
whose land ye dwell: but ye have not hearkened unto
my voice.

11 And the angel of the LORD came, and sat under the
oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the

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vi. 7–10. *Fragment of a prophetic rebuke.* The appearance of the angel of Yahweh is preceded here by the appearance of a man, whom the writer calls 'a prophet.' There were probably, even in this early time, men devoted to Yahweh-worship, who wandered from place to place like Elijah and Elisha in later times, and who were regarded as holy men by the people (see xiii. 6). But where did this man appear, and to whom? Many scholars believe that the story of the angel of Yahweh (verses 11–24) comes from another tradition, and that the prophet's words were followed in this story by verses 25 ff. The record of the prophet's words would then be intelligible. Gideon heard them, and the same night was stirred by Yahweh to destroy the altar of the local god.

The burden of the prophet's message is the usual one for the time, and each sentence in it is to be found in other books. The Hebrews knew Yahweh as the God who had delivered them from Egyptian bondage. (They had never worshipped Him as Yahweh before.) It was therefore ingratitude that was their sin when they turned aside to worship other gods.

The words of the message seem to be incompletely recorded, unless we are to suppose that the evil condition in which the people were was sufficient to supply to their minds such a conclusion as—' therefore you are suffering these things.'

vi. 11–24. *Visit of Yahweh's angel to Gideon, and the erection of an altar in Ophrah.*

11. angel of the LORD. See ii. 1.

oak. See iv. 11.

Abiezrite: and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in
the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the 12
angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him,
The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And 13
Gideon said unto him, Oh my lord, if the LORD be with
us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his
wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying,
Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the
LORD hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of
Midian. And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go 14
in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of
Midian: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, 15
Oh Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my
family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in
my father's house. And the LORD said unto him, Surely 16
I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites

Ophrah. The position of this town is unknown. It seems to have been near Shechem.

Joash the Abiezrite. Joash is mentioned in this story only. Abiezer, according to Joshua xvii. 2, was one of the divisions of the tribe of Manasseh (so 1 Chron. vii. 18: cf. Num. xxvi. 30).

wheat in the winepress. The usual threshing-floor was a flat or flattened rocky surface in an exposed position. The winepress was a shallow vat cut in the rocky soil. The use of the press for threshing shows that a small quantity only was being threshed at one time.

12, 13. The greeting was probably in as common use as our 'good-bye,' and used with as little realization of its meaning. But to Gideon, who realizes both the meaning of the words and the actual misery of his people, the greeting is a sarcasm, hence his reply.

14. the LORD looked upon him. The Greek translation reads, 'the angel of the Lord.'

in this thy might: in this strength or ability of thine, i. e. this physical strength manifest in his threshing; perhaps also with an allusion to the strength of character shown in his refusal to accept the conventional greeting without question.

15. A **family** or 'thousand' is a division of a tribe, and is itself made up of several 'father's houses.'

16. The Greek translation reads, 'The Lord will be with thee.'

17 as one man. And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that it is thou
18 that talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and lay it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou
19 come again. And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of meal: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and pre-
20 sented it. And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon
21 this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there went up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and the angel
22 of the LORD departed out of his sight. And Gideon saw that he was the angel of the LORD; and Gideon said, Alas,

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Gideon does not know yet that it is Yahweh who speaks with him (cf. verse 22).

17. The second half of the verse has evidently been introduced by one who wants to make the meal a sacrifice from the beginning. It is clear that in the original story Gideon, not knowing with whom he speaks, but struck with the encouraging words and manner of the visitor, invites him to a meal. 'If now I have found grace in thy sight, depart not hence, until,' &c. (Cf. Gen. xviii. 3–5.)

vi. 18–21. *The meal becomes a sacrifice.*

19. made ready a kid: as Manoah did under similar circumstances (xiii. 15, 19).

21. fire out of the rock. Miraculous fire consumed the sacrifice of Moses, Lev. ix. 24; of Elijah at Carmel, 1 Kings xviii; and of Solomon, 2 Chron. vii. 1.

and the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. Thees words come too soon, for the angel (now known to be Yahweh) speaks again in verse 23.

22. Compare Exod. xxxiii. 20; Judges xiii. 22, and other passages.

O Lord God! forasmuch as I have seen the angel of the
Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace 23
be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Then Gideon 24
built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord said 25
unto him, Take thy father's bullock, even the second
bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of
Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the Asherah
that is by it: and build an altar unto the Lord thy God 26
upon the top of this strong hold, in the orderly manner,
and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt offering
with the wood of the Asherah which thou shalt cut
down. Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and 27
did as the Lord had spoken unto him: and it came to
pass, because he feared his father's household and the
men of the city, so that he could not do it by day, that
he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose 28

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24. Jehovah-shalom: 'Yahweh is peace' (R. V. marg.), in allusion to the words of Yahweh in verse 23. So an altar is called 'Yahweh is my banner' in Exod. xvii. 15; a place is called 'Yahweh will see' by Abraham, Gen. xxii. 14; Jerusalem is called 'Yahweh is our righteousness' by Jeremiah (Jer. xxxiii. 16).

vi. 25-32. *The destruction of the Baal's altar (in Ophrah).*

25. the same night refers back as it stands to the incident in verses 11-24, but may originally have come after verse 10.

The second clause of this verse is unintelligible in the Hebrew, and the English translation is only an attempt to make sense. The Greek presupposes another original, but is also unintelligible. The mention of a second bullock seems quite out of place.

Baal that thy father hath: i.e. the local deity. There were various Baals in different parts of the country (see ii. 11), and the name was even given to Yahweh in early times.

the Asherah here, as in many other passages, is the pole or post set up beside an altar. Its exact form and significance are not known. It is mentioned in Phoenician inscriptions.

26. strong hold: a naturally strong position.

in the orderly manner. The meaning is doubtful.

early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was broken down, and the Asherah was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar
29 that was built. And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they inquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this
30 thing. Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath broken down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down
31 the Asherah that was by it. And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? or will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst *it is yet* morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath broken down his
32 altar. Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath broken down his altar.

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31. The full force of the question in the Hebrew here can only be brought out in English by strongly accenting the pronouns 'Will YOU plead for Baal? or will YOU save HIM?' Cf. Job xiii. 8, 'Will ye contend for God?' where, however, the accent is on 'God' and not on the pronoun.

he that will plead for him (i. e. take his part), **let him be put to death whilst** it is yet **morning.** These words interrupt the context, and may have been introduced from a marginal note. 'Before morning' (marg.), i. e. before the morrow. This is the more natural sense of the Hebrew words, but they may mean 'while it is still morning.'

32. The explanation of the name Jerubbaal is, like many other such in the O. T., based on a similarity of sound, though accompanied by real difference of meaning. Even if the first part of the name were derived from the verb meaning 'to strive' (which would presuppose the existence of a form of the verb different from that in use everywhere else), it would mean 'Baal strives.' The real meaning is probably 'Baal founds,' and we do not know why such a name was given. As the name Baal was used of Yahweh in early times, we find it as a constituent in several Hebrew names (Ishbaal, Meribaal, &c.). Later, an endeavour was

Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the 33
children of the east assembled themselves together; and
they passed over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.
But the spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; and he 34
blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered together after
him. And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; 35
and they also were gathered together after him: and he
sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto
Naphtali; and they came up to meet them. And Gideon 36
said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as
thou hast spoken, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on 37
the threshing-floor; if there be dew on the fleece only,
and it be dry upon all the ground, then shall I know
that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast
spoken. And it was so: for he rose up early on the 38
morrow, and pressed the fleece together, and wringed
the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. And 39

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made to explain such names so as to avoid what had become offensive, when a Baal was only an idol.

vi. 33-35. *The Midianites in Jezreel, and Gideon's preparations.* Gideon's belief that he was called to be the deliverer of his people was soon put to the test. The Midianites came into Palestine again on one of their raiding expeditions. This time they **passed over** the Jordan and camped in **the valley of Jezreel,** i. e. the valley leading from the Jordan, south of the Sea of Galilee, up to the plain of Esdraelon. Into Gideon's soul came that rush of superhuman vigour and courage which the people called 'the spirit of Yahweh' (see iii. 10), and he sent the war-summons to his own people, Abiezer, to follow him. According to viii. 2 it was *their* effort that drove back the invaders, but here we are told he was supported by the tribes of the neighbourhood, Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali (Issachar omitted here as elsewhere in this book). The story is continued in vii. 1.

vi. 36-40. *The sign of the fleece.* It was in accordance with the customs of these early days that a man should seek to know the will of the Deity by a material sign (see i. 1).

As the name Elohim is used instead of Yahweh for God in this story, it is probably taken by the editor from another source.

Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be kindled against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let
40 there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

7 Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the spring of Harod: and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.
2 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying,
3 Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

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39 ^{a} is quoted from Gen. xviii. 32.

vii. 1. *Continuation of the war movement from* vi. 35.

1. In vi. 33 the Midianites are in Jezreel, therefore if this verse is from the same story the places mentioned here must be in that valley.

the spring of Harod is mentioned only in this place, and is generally identified with 'Ain Jalûd at the foot of Gilboa.

the hill of Moreh would then be the hill Neby Duhy about four miles away on the north side of the valley.

vii. 2–8. *The reduction of Gideon's army.* Yahweh requires of Gideon that he should reduce the number of his followers, that the coming victory may not be an occasion of boasting to the Hebrews. Gideon accordingly dismisses twenty-two thousand who are afraid. Yahweh demands still another sifting of the ten thousand who remain. By a test of their caution, shown in the way they drink at the spring, Gideon reduces his army to three hundred men. To these Yahweh promises victory.

3. and depart from mount Gilead. Mount Gilead is east of the Jordan, and so must be a mistake here. It has been suggested

And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet 4
too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will
try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I
say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go
with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall
not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought 5
down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto
Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his
tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself;
likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to
drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their 6
hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the
rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink
water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three 7
hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver
the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the people
go every man unto his place. So the people took victuals 8
in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the

---

that 'mount Gilboa' was the original reading. The word translated 'depart' is found only here, and its meaning is uncertain. Moore suggests that two letters of this verb have been inverted and the name corrupted, and that the original text was 'and Gideon tested (the same Hebrew word as 'try' in verse 4) them.' There is no manuscript authority for this, but without some such sentence we have only Yahweh's command and no mention of Gideon's carrying it out.

4–6. Various explanations have been given of the methods of drinking mentioned. The only one that seems to satisfy the text as it stands is that the three hundred took water in their hands and licked it up as a dog laps, and that the rest bent down on their knees and drank directly from the stream. The reason for choosing the former has also been explained in many ways, for example, the caution shown by them in not putting themselves in a defenceless posture when the enemy was near, or the power of being satisfied with little water in a hot country, &c. It may be, however, that the tradition only meant to indicate an arbitrary sign, like that of the fleece above. It is curious that, judging by viii. 2, these men were Abiezrites.

men of Israel every man unto his tent, but retained the
three hundred men: and the camp of Midian was beneath
him in the valley.

9 And it came to pass the same night, that the Lord
said unto him, Arise, get thee down into the camp; for
10 I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to
go down, go thou with Purah thy servant down to the
11 camp: and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward
shall thine hands be strengthened to go down into the
camp. Then went he down with Purah his servant unto
the outermost part of the armed men that were in the
12 camp. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all
the children of the east lay along in the valley like locusts
for multitude; and their camels were without number, as
13 the sand which is upon the sea shore for multitude. And
when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that
told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed
a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the
camp of Midian, and came unto the tent, and smote it
that it fell, and turned it upside down, that the tent lay

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vii. 9–14. *Gideon's visit to the Midianite camp.* Two courses of action are suggested to Gideon: the one a night attack at once, in the confident belief that Yahweh will give him victory (verse 9), the other, a private reconnoitre to see the state of affairs. He is afraid to risk the former, so takes his servant, steals into the outskirts of the Midianite camp, and hears enough to make him believe in the success of a sudden attack.

12. Cf. vi. 5.

13. Every dream in olden time had its meaning, and was in some sort a message from the Deity. Gideon overhears two Midianites talking in a tent of such a message. One of the flat round cakes of barley-bread used by nomads falls into the Midianite camp, and rolling on its edge like a wheel, strikes against the tent of the sleeper and overturns it. This dream is interpreted by the friend of the speaker as indicating the destruction of Midian by 'a man of Israel.' Gideon, as he hears, at once realizes that such an interpretation betrays a feeling of fear among the Midianites that promises well for his own success.

along. And his fellow answered and said, This is 14
nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: into his hand God hath delivered Midian, and all the host.

And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the 15
dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped; and he returned into the camp of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of
Midian. And he divided the three hundred men into 16
three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within
the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and 17
do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do.
When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, 18
then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For the LORD and for Gideon.

So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, 19
came unto the outermost part of the camp in the begin-

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vii. 15-18. *Gideon's return and preparations.* Two traditions seem to have been combined in these and the following verses (see Introduction). According to one of them, a panic was produced by the simultaneous blowing of trumpets in accordance with Gideon's instructions in verse 18. According to the other story Gideon gave his men pitchers with lighted torches in them, and it was by the breaking of the pitchers and flashing of the torches that the Midianites were thrown into confusion. By the combination of these two accounts Gideon's men have their hands more than full.

15. worshipped: prostrated himself, recognizing the encouragement as coming from his God.

16. three companies: so as to come upon the enemy from three sides and make them believe they were surrounded. (Cf. 1 Sam. xi. 11.)

18. and say, For the LORD and for Gideon: evidently a note, introduced probably from verse 20. The verb 'say' is very tame.

vii. 19-25. *The attack.*

19. in the beginning of the middle watch. The night was

ning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in
20 pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and
21 they cried, The sword of the LORD and of Gideon. And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put *them* to
22 flight. And they blew the three hundred trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, and against all the host: and the host fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah,
23 by Tabbath. And the men of Israel were gathered together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all
24 Manasseh, and pursued after Midian. And Gideon sent

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divided into three watches of four hours each. The middle watch would begin about 10 p.m., and as the attack was made 'when they had but newly set the watch,' i. e. posted the guards of the new watch, that would be soon after 10.

20. 'For Yahweh and for Gideon' (without the word 'sword') was probably the battle-cry (as in verse 18).

21, 22. Gideon's men stood still on three sides of the camp, shouting and blowing their trumpets. The Midianites, panic-stricken, fled in the one direction open, and believing themselves to be pursued, and that their fellow fugitives were Hebrews, turned their weapons against one another.

The four places mentioned have not been satisfactorily identified, but probably lay along the valleys of Jezreel and the Jordan. **Beth-shittah** may be the modern Shutta, about halfway between Shunem and Beth-shean, and **Zererah** may be the same place as the Zeredah of 1 Kings vii. **Abel-meholah**, according to Jerome, was ten miles south of Beth-shean, and so would almost correspond with the modern 'Ain Helweh (9½ miles). **Tabbath** is quite unknown.

23, 24. After their success in attack the Abiezrites were joined in the pursuit of Midian by their kinsmen of Manasseh, and according to the story as it stands, by men from Asher and Naphtali. As the flight was evidently southwards down the messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, Come down against Midian, and take before them the waters, as far as Beth-barah, even Jordan. So all the men of Ephraim were gathered together, and took the waters as far as Beth-barah, even Jordan. And they took 25 the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian: and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon beyond Jordan.

And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast 8 thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with Midian? And they did chide with him sharply. And he said unto them, What have I now 2 done in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God hath delivered into your hand the princes of Midian, 3 Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison

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Jordan valley, the men of Ephraim were hastily summoned to cut them off. The site of **Beth-barah** is unknown, but the Midianites, too hotly pursued to be able as a whole to cross any of the small fords across the Jordan, many seem to have made for the larger one at the present Dāmieh, hoping either to cross there or to get over the tributary stream (Wādi Far'ah) and escape to the fords of the lower river. The prompt response of the Ephraimites cut them off from both possibilities.

25. There were two sites known in the author's days as **the rock of Oreb** and **the winepress of Zeeb.** These names kept in remembrance the death of the two Midianite princes.

viii. 1–3. The author has already anticipated the events of verse 4 by mentioning Gideon in vii. 35 as beyond Jordan. He now interrupts the thread of the battle-story to tell of the Ephraimites' jealousy and how Gideon appeased it.

Ephraim was the most important tribe of Northern Palestine, and was jealous of its position. In xii. 1–7 we find it again assuming a dictatorial tone, but meeting with a different reception. The Abiezrites were too small and weak to oppose Ephraim's claims, and with an ingenuity that seems to have

of you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when
4 he had said that. And Gideon came to Jordan, *and*
passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were
5 with him, faint, yet pursuing. And he said unto the
men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto
the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am
pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.
6 And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah
and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give
7 bread unto thine army? And Gideon said, Therefore
when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into
mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of

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belonged to his family (cf. vi. 31) Gideon appeased the wrath of his accusers.

viii. 4-21. *Gideon east of the Jordan.* The story of Gideon's pursuit is taken up again from vii. 24. After having sent messengers to Ephraim (whose success and later complaint have been interpolated in vii. 25, viii. 1-3), he himself crossed one of the fords of the upper Jordan, and following such as had managed to escape this way, made for the camp where the Midianite kings Zebah and Zalmunna were. Against these he was urged by the sacred duty of blood-revenge, for they had, on some occasion of which we are not told, killed his brothers at Tabor. He captured the two kings, and after punishing the cities of Succoth and Penuel which had refused him food, he put them to death with his own hand.

4. the three hundred men alone accomplish Gideon's work of revenge.

faint *and* **pursuing** (not 'yet' as in the English) seems so weak that the Greek translation, which reads 'faint and hungry,' is probably the original.

5. The site of **Succoth** is not certain, but it is generally identified with Tell Deir 'Alla, east of the Jordan and about a mile north of the Jabbok.

Zebah and Zalmunna. These names, which must naturally be Midianitish, are read as Hebrew words meaning 'Victim' and 'Refuge refused' so as to indicate their fate. This play on names is frequent in the O. T.

6. princes of Succoth: see verse 14.

7. The Hebrew of the latter part of this verse is doubtful, but the meaning evidently is—'I will throw you down naked, and

the wilderness and with briers. And he went up thence 8
to Penuel, and spake unto them in like manner: and the
men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had
answered. And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, 9
saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down
this tower.

Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and their 10
hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that
were left of all the host of the children of the east: for
there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that 11
drew sword. And Gideon went up by the way of them
that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, 12
and smote the host; for the host was secure. And Zebah
and Zalmunna fled; and he pursued after them; and he
took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and 13
discomfited all the host. And Gideon the son of Joash 14
returned from the battle from the ascent of Heres. And
he caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and

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trample on you with thorns and teasels as the threshing-board (a flat board set with stones on the under side) passes over the corn.'

8. Penuel: a place of some importance in the time of Jeroboam I (1 Kings xii), mentioned also in Gen. xxxii. 31. It was near the Jabbok, but its exact site is not known.

9. this tower: the stronghold often found within an unprotected city.

10, 11. Karkor is unknown, so also **Nobah,** which is mentioned in Num. xxxii. 42 as a city of Manasseh. **Jogbehah** (Num. xxxii. 35) is probably Khirbet el-Gubeihāt to the north-west of 'Ammān.

the way of them that dwelt in tents is a guess at the meaning of a Hebrew sentence which is so corrupt that it is impossible to say what the original was.

13. from the ascent of Heres: rather 'from above Heres,' or 'from the pass of Heres.' Nothing is known of such a place in this locality.

14. The city was governed as usual by 'elders,' or heads of the resident families, and 'princes,' or officers of these elders appointed for military and perhaps special civic duties.

inquired of him: and he described for him the princes
of Succoth, and the elders thereof, seventy and seven
15 men. And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said,
Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, concerning whom ye did
taunt me, saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna
now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy
16 men that are weary? And he took the elders of the city,
and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them
17 he taught the men of Succoth. And he brake down the
18 tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city. Then
said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of
men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they
answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled
19 the children of a king. And he said, They were my
brethren, the sons of my mother: as the LORD liveth, if
20 ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. And he
said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But
the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he
21 was yet a youth. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise
thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his
strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zal-

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16. taught. All the early translations read 'threshed,' as in R. V. marg. and verse 7.

viii. 18-21. The two Midianite kings, either during this or some former raid, had killed the brothers of Gideon at Tabor (verses 18 ff.). According to the practice of blood-revenge which obtained until the introduction of fixed law and centralized authority, and which is recognized in the Pentateuch (cf. the establishment of cities of refuge), it was Gideon's duty to slay the murderers and to make war upon their people until he had done this. The author of our book has not mentioned this incentive before, probably because he is concerned with the actions of Gideon only as a deliverer of his people.

18. What manner of men. The Hebrew is 'Where are the men?' This is also the reading of the Greek version. The English is a translation of the Latin.

20. Jether: the same name as Jethro.

munna, and took the crescents that were on their camels' necks.

Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou 22
over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also:
for thou hast saved us out of the hand of Midian. And 23
Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither
shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.
And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of 24
you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his
spoil. (For they had golden earrings, because they were
Ishmaelites.) And they answered, We will willingly give 25
them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein
every man the earrings of his spoil. And the weight of 26

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21. the crescents were ornaments, which made of gold were worn by men (verse 26), and of various metals are put on the necks of camels up to the present day.

viii. 22-23. *Gideon refuses Kingship.* This is the first recorded attempt among the Hebrews to establish an hereditary ruler.

22. The expression **men of Israel** is the general one used by the author throughout this book, but the kingship offered to Gideon was probably only that over his own tribe of Manasseh (compare the story of Abimelech). The novelty consisted in the offer to make the rule pass from father to son. The words 'Yahweh will rule over you' are generally taken to indicate the reason of Gideon's refusal, and are supposed to be late because the Israelites only came, after a long and sad experience of kingship, to believe that Yahweh would not tolerate an earthly rival as king of Israel. Probably however Gideon's reasons are not given here at all, and this sentence only expresses his belief that Yahweh will look after the people, even though he (Gideon) will not take charge of them.

viii. 24-27. *Gideon's spoil and its use.*

24. earrings. The Hebrew word means 'rings' only, and may refer to nose-rings—which however are mentioned in the O. T. only as used by women—or ear-rings.

Ishmaelites must mean here nomads in manner of life resembling Ishmaelites, for according to Gen. xxv these are descendants of Hagar, while the Midianites are descendants of Keturah.

the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold; beside the crescents, and the pendants, and the purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that were
27 about their camels' necks. And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: [**D**] and all Israel went a whoring after it there: and it became a
28 snare unto Gideon, and to his house. So Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, and they lifted up their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon.

29 And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his
30 own house. [**A**] And Gideon had threescore and ten sons
31 of his body begotten: for he had many wives. And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son,
32 and he called his name Abimelech. And Gideon the

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26. a thousand and seven hundred shekels: nearly seventy pounds.

crescents: thin flat plates of metal in crescent form, worn round the neck.

pendants: perhaps ear-rings.

purple: a reddish-purple costly in all ages, and used for royal garments.

chains, &c., neck-pendants. Animals in the East are often adorned with such ornaments.

27. Gideon made an ephod. The traditions in chs. vi and vii agree in ascribing to Gideon a strong religious character. This is confirmed by his use of his share of the Midianitish spoil. The ephod was an image of some sort, very much in use for consulting the oracle (see xvii). At the time when the Book of Judges was compiled such images were an abomination, so the writer makes this one **a snare unto Gideon and to his house.** In itself, however, and in Gideon's day, it was the natural expression of a religious nature.

28. The Deuteronomic author's usual remark that the land had rest for a generation after the great deeds of this 'judge.'

29. A verse taken from the Jerubbaal traditions and put in here without much relation to context.

viii. 30-32. *Gideon's family and death.* These two verses are son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

[D] And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, 33
that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after the Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. And 34
the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies on every side: neither shewed they kindness to 35
the house of Jerubbaal, *who is* Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

[J] And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to She- 9

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evidently an introduction to ch. ix, and like it were probably added to the book in its later form (see ix).

viii. 33-35. Again the editor's account of the defection of the Hebrews from Yahweh after the death of the 'judge.' The sin of the Hebrews was in turning from the worship of Yahweh their own God to the worship of Canaanitish gods. Although the writer felt bound to make a depreciatory remark (verse 27 b) about Gideon's ephod, he recognized that its establishment was not a 'turning away' from Yahweh.

33. Baal-berith: i. e. Baal of a covenant. The name suggests an attempt to unite the Hebrews of this district with the Canaanites in it by the common worship of a Baal created for the purpose (see also ix. 4, 46).

ix. 1-6. *Abimelech.* The editor has told in the usual terms (viii. 33-35) how after the death of Gideon the Israelites turned from Yahweh, and should now tell how Yahweh was angry and sold them into the hands of another nation until they repented, when He raised up another 'judge.' But this does not occur until x. 6 ff. It is clear that the Deuteronomic editor did not count Abimelech as a judge. There is little doubt that the story of Abimelech was contained in the collection of traditions from which our author drew (see Introd.), and we are compelled to think that either he put the story in, as it is, as a supplement to Gideon's story, or that he omitted it and it was introduced later from the source in a revision of the book, with viii. 30-32 as a connecting link.

1. Abimelech ('my father is Melek,' where Melek may be Yahweh or another god) was the offspring of a connexion in which the woman remained in her own home and the children were reckoned to the mother's family (not, as in regular marriage, to the

chem unto his mother's brethren, and spake with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father,
2 saying, Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, rule over you, or that one rule over you? remember also that
3 I am your bone and your flesh. And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words: and their hearts inclined to follow
4 Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother. And they gave him threescore and ten *pieces* of silver out of the house of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain
5 and light fellows, which followed him. And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: but Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself.

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father's). Abimelech would have been brought up at first in his mother's home, but seems at this time to be in his father's house. His mother seems to have been of a Canaanitish family of some influence, though Jotham speaks slightingly of her as his father's maidservant (verse 18).

Shechem, the present Nablūs (an Arabic corruption of the Roman name, Flavia Neapolis), lies in the valley between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim nearly halfway between Jerusalem and Nazareth. It is regarded here (as in Gen. xxxiv) as largely Canaanitish, although according to Joshua xxiv. 32 (E) Joseph was buried there. At a later time the Northern kingdom was founded here (1 Kings xii. 1 ff.).

2. The **rule over you** seems to refer to an influence like that of the early Medicis in Florence, not constitutional, but very real.

your bone and your flesh: 'your flesh and blood,' as we should say. This appeal was specially apt under the circumstances mentioned above (verse 1).

4. vain and light fellows: *lit.* 'men worthless and reckless' (cf. xi. 3). Such bands of men were often employed as mercenary troops in mediaeval Europe for similar purposes.

5. upon one stone: i.e. like beasts at a sacrifice (cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 33 f.).

And all the men of Shechem assembled themselves 6
together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made
Abimelech king, by the oak of the pillar that was in
Shechem. And when they told it to Jotham, he went 7
and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his
voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me,
ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.
The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over 8
them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over
us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave 9
my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man,
and go to wave to and fro over the trees? And the trees 10
said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But 11
the fig tree said unto them, Should I leave my sweetness,

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6. the house of Millo in other passages (e. g. 2 Sam. v. 9; 1 Kings ix. 15, 24; 2 Kings xii. 20) is a fortified building, but here and in verse 15 it is used with the 'men of Shechem' as if it were the name of a family.

The word translated 'pillar' (marg. 'garrison') seems to have arisen by an alteration of the vowels from the word used of a sacred stone. These sacred stones were common in early days (Jacob erects his pillow as one in Gen. xxviii. 18), but were associated with idolatry in later times, hence the alteration here. For the sacred tree in Shechem see Gen. xxxv. 4 and Joshua xxiv. 26, where the stone also is mentioned.

ix. 7–21. *Jotham's address to the Shechemites.* Jotham, the only son of Gideon who had escaped death at the hands of Abimelech, learning that Abimelech was being proclaimed king, went up Mount Gerizim on the south side of Shechem, and standing on a projecting rock (not 'the top,' which is 900 feet high) addressed the assembled crowd. His speech consists of two parts:—(1) a fable (verses 8–15) in which the olive, fig-tree, and vine decline to rule over the trees, because God has given them nobler work to do in the production of useful fruits; but the thorn, which bears no such fruit, but when fired is capable of destroying even the noble cedars, accepts the invitation and boasts in ridiculous fashion of its own power which is only for harm. The point of the fable is in the sarcastic comparison of Abimelech with the thorn. Fables of trees and beasts were known among the Hebrews as among other early peoples. We have another short one of trees

and my good fruit, and go to wave to and fro over the
12 trees? And the trees said unto the vine, Come thou, and
13 reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I
leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to
14 wave to and fro over the trees? Then said all the trees
15 unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And
the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me
king over you, then come and put your trust in my
shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble,
16 and devour the cedars of Lebanon. Now therefore, if
ye have dealt truly and uprightly, in that ye have made
Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal
and his house, and have done unto him according to the
17 deserving of his hands; (for my father fought for you,
and adventured his life, and delivered you out of the
18 hand of Midian: and ye are risen up against my father's
house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and
ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech,
the son of his maidservant, king over the men of She-
19 chem, because he is your brother;) if ye then have dealt
truly and uprightly with Jerubbaal and with his house

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in the reply of Jehoash of Israel to Amaziah of Judah (story of the thistle and the cedar, 2 Kings xiv. 9), and remains of animal fables are to be found in Proverbs.

(2) A prayer (verses 16-20) that the Shechemites and Abimelech may be rewarded according to their deserts. The irony of the fable is kept up here, especially in the balanced form of the speech and the refraining from any statement of his own judgement explicitly stated. 'If,' he says, 'you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house (what you have done is—you have killed his legitimate sons and made the son of his maidservant your king), then may you have joy of one another; but if you have done evilly and ungratefully, then may fire from your thorn-king come and consume you, and you in like manner consume him.' This imprecation can scarcely be called the application of the fable, which like his own wish in this part is too clear to need to be explained.

this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also
rejoice in you: but if not, let fire come out from 20
Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the
house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of
Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour
Abimelech. And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went 21
to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his
brother.

And Abimelech was prince over Israel three years. 22
And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the 23
men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt
treacherously with Abimelech: that the violence done to 24
the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come,
and that their blood might be laid upon Abimelech their
brother, which slew them, and upon the men of Shechem,
which strengthened his hands to slay his brethren. And 25
the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him on the tops

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21. Jotham then fled to **Beer,** which Eusebius identifies with a place of that name eight miles north of Beth-shean; but Beer only means 'Well,' and there were many places of that name, so that we cannot say where it was.

ix. 22–49. *Rebellion against Abimelech in Shechem.* Two accounts of such rebellions are given here. The one is that of a party of Canaanitish malcontents led by a man named Gaal. This was ended by Gaal's expulsion from the city (verses 26–41). The other begins in verses 22–25, is broken off by the story of Gaal's revolt and expulsion, and is continued in verses 42–49. This was a more general outbreak, and ended in the destruction of the city and then of the temple of El-berith (= Baal-berith).

22. over Israel writes the compiler, because he is concerned with Israelites only. Abimelech was king over the Manassites and Canaanites who inhabited the district round Shechem.

23. And God (Elohim) **sent an evil spirit,** as in the case of Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 14, xviii. 10) and the false prophets of Ahab's time (1 Kings xxii. 19–23). Cf. iii. 10.

24. A remark of one of the editors.

25. The Shechemites became highway robbers and made the roads insecure, thus damaging Abimelech's prestige. They also probably plundered his caravans.

of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along that way by them: and it was told Abimelech.

26 And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem
27 put their trust in him. And they went out into the field, and gathered their vineyards, and trode *the grapes*, and held festival, and went into the house of their god, and
28 did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech. And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? is not he the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? serve ye the men of Hamor the father of Shechem: but why should we
29 serve him? And would to God this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech. And he said to Abimelech, Increase thine army, and come out.

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ix. 26–41. *The revolt and expulsion of Gaal.*

26. son of Ebed: i. e. 'of a slave.' His father's real name was probably Obed (i. e. a worshipper of some god), as in Ruth iv.

went over to Shechem: *lit.* 'passed by Shechem.' The expression seems to point to Gaal as a wandering demagogue.

27. held festival: *lit.* made rejoicings. The word for 'rejoicings' occurs only in one other place in the O.T., viz. in Lev. xix. 24, where it is translated 'giving praise.' The festival was celebrated, as in Roman Catholic lands of Europe to-day, by worship in the temple and hilarious merriment outside it. Such an occasion Gaal took, as Amos probably did later at Beth-el, for addressing the people. (Cf. Ibsen, *The League of Youth*, Act. i, for a similar scene in modern life.)

28, 29. The men of Shechem as they ate and drank together cursed their tyrant, and Gaal took advantage of their discontent to address them in words, which are not quite clear as they stand, but which seem to mean 'Who is Abimelech, the son of a Hebrew father, that he should rule over Shechem? Why should Shechem, a Canaanitish city, serve him? Both Abimelech and Zebul his agent are only Shechemite subjects. If I were your leader, I would soon get rid of Abimelech. I would say to Abimelech, "Increase your army and come to battle."' The only changes made thus in the text are, 'they served' for 'serve ye' in verse 28, and 'I would say' for 'he said' in verse 29. Both changes are supported by Greek translations.

And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of 30
Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. And he 31
sent messengers unto Abimelech craftily, saying, Behold,
Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren are come to Shechem; and, behold, they constrain the city *to take part*
against thee. Now therefore, up by night, thou and the 32
people that is with thee, and lie in wait in the field: and 33
it shall be, that in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and, behold, when he and the people that is with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion.

And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were 34
with him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem
in four companies. And Gaal the son of Ebed went 35
out, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and the people that were with

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ix. 30-33. *Zebul reports to Abimelech.*

31. craftily, rather as in marg. 'in Tormah,' which is probably a mistake in writing for Arumah (see verse 41).

constrain the city . . . against thee. The Hebrew means 'are besieging the city against thee,' which is evidently not right. A change of one letter would give 'are laying snares to thy harm'; or we may conjecture 'are stirring up the city against thee.'

32. in the field: i. e. in the open country round Shechem. The ambush was actually set in the hill-tops (see verse 36).

ix. 34-41. *Abimelech's attack and Gaal's expulsion.* Zebul evidently pretended to be friendly to Gaal, and drew him out to the usual meeting-place, the gate of the city, in the early morning. Gaal, alarmed at the sight of a number of men moving on the hills, is at first assured by Zebul that he sees but the shadows cast on the hills by the morning sun, but when the approach can be no longer concealed, Zebul taunts him now with his former boasting against Abimelech. Gaal actually does lead his followers (while Zebul doubtless remained in the city with his party and kept order there), but is driven back into the city. Some of his followers were wounded. It was not a very dreadful fight, and apparently none were killed. Zebul had no trouble now in expelling the demagogue.

36 him, from the ambushment. And when Gaal saw the
people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people
down from the tops of the mountains. And Zebul said
unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if
37 they were men. And Gaal spake again and said, See,
there come people down by the middle of the land, and
one company cometh by the way of the oak of Meonenim.
38 Then said Zebul unto him, Where is now thy mouth,
that thou saidst, Who is Abimelech, that we should
serve him? is not this the people that thou hast de-
39 spised? go out now, I pray, and fight with them. And
Gaal went out before the men of Shechem, and fought
40 with Abimelech. And Abimelech chased him, and he
fled before him, and there fell many wounded, even unto
41 the entering of the gate. And Abimelech dwelt at
Arumah: and Zebul drave out Gaal and his brethren,
42 that they should not dwell in Shechem. And it came to
pass on the morrow, that the people went out into the
43 field; and they told Abimelech. And he took the

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37. the middle of the land, or 'the land's navel,' probably the name of a hill.

the oak of Meonenim, or 'the augur's oak,' another of the sacred trees (see iv. 11, vi. 11) near Shechem.

41. And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah. Apparently he did not care to show himself in Shechem, but left Zebul to manage his interests there. The site of Arumah is uncertain, though it may be the modern el-'Ormeh, two hours south-east of Shechem.

ix. 42–45. *Destruction of Shechem.* The story of the general discontent in Shechem was begun in verses 22–25, and then broken off to tell of the previous revolt of a party under Gaal. It is taken up again and concluded in these verses. Having been told that the men of Shechem were practising highway-robbery (like barons of the Middle Ages in Europe), Abimelech takes soldiers and puts them in ambush in three companies. When many of the Shechemites have gone out to their work in the fields or on a plundering expedition, one company rushes the people, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field; and he looked, and, behold, the people came forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them. And Abimelech, and the companies 44 that were with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two companies rushed upon all that were in the field, and smote them. And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and 45 he took the city, and slew the people that was therein: and he beat down the city, and sowed it with salt.

And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard 46 thereof, they entered into the hold of the house of El-berith. And it was told Abimelech that all the men of 47 the tower of Shechem were gathered together. And 48 Abimelech gat him up to mount Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it up, and laid it on his shoulder: and he said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done. And all the 49

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gateway, the other two companies attack the field-workers. The battle lasts all day and the city is destroyed.

44. the companies that were with him should be 'the company that was with him.'

45. sowed it with salt: a figurative expression for making utterly desolate. Cf. Deut. xxix. 23; Jer. xvii. 6, &c. Shechem was a flourishing city again in Solomon's time (1 Kings xii. 1), but it is no longer Canaanitish.

ix. 46–49. *Destruction of the temple of El-berith.*

46. the tower of Shechem must have been either a place outside Shechem or a fortified part of the city which held out after the rest was destroyed. In it was the temple of El-berith (or Baal-berith, as in some Greek MSS.; El and Baal both mean God). What part of this building the 'hold' was we do not know, as the word occurs only here and in 1 Sam. xiii. 6. It was clearly a part suited for defence.

48. mount Zalmon is not known.

an axe: marg. 'the axes' should probably be read 'his axe.'

people likewise cut down every man his bough, and
followed Abimelech, and put them to the hold, and set
the hold on fire upon them; so that all the men of the
tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and
women.

50 Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped
51 against Thebez, and took it. But there was a strong
tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and
women, and all they of the city, and shut themselves in,
52 and gat them up to the roof of the tower. And Abimelech
came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard
53 unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. And a
certain woman cast an upper millstone upon Abimelech's
54 head, and brake his skull. Then he called hastily unto
the young man his armourbearer, and said unto him,
Draw thy sword, and kill me, that men say not of me, A
woman slew him. And his young man thrust him
55 through, and he died. And when the men of Israel saw
that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto
56 his place. Thus God requited the wickedness of Abimelech,
which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy

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ix. 50–55. *Siege of Thebez and death of Abimelech.*

50. Thebez is placed by Eusebius thirteen miles from Shechem on the road to Beth-shean, and is generally identified with Tūbās, which is situated on the slope of a hill close by a small valley. The discontent with Abimelech was not confined to Shechem.

53. an upper millstone would be a circular piece of hard stone, a few inches thick, a foot or more in diameter, with a hole for the meal and a handle for the grinder.

54. his armourbearer. Leaders usually had a personal attendant of this kind; so Jonathan, 1 Sam. xiv. 6; Saul, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4 ff.; cf. Judges vii. 10 f.

55. the men of Israel. Israelites would naturally be the chief supporters of Abimelech against Canaanitish revolts. The short-lived kingdom probably came to an end with Abimelech's death.

56, 57. The moral of the fate of Abimelech and Shechem of the same tenor as verse 24.

brethren: and all the wickedness of the men of Shechem 57 did God requite upon their heads: and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

And after Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola 10 the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, 2 and was buried in Shamir.

And after him arose Jair, the Gileadite; and he judged 3 Israel twenty and two years. And he had thirty sons 4 that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havvoth-jair unto this day, which are in

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x. 1–2. *Tola.*

1. Tola and **Puah** appear in Gen. xlvi. 13, Num. xxvi. 23, and 1 Chron. vii. 1 ff., as brother-clans of Issachar; the former being distinguished for its valour and the number of its members, according to the passage in Chronicles.

Dodo is translated as a common noun by the Greek and Latin versions. It means 'his uncle,' and the Latin has 'uncle of Abimelech.' This cannot be correct, as Abimelech was of Manasseh, and Puah of Issachar. The name Dodo occurs twice in 2 Sam. xxiii. 9, 24 (cf. 1 Chron. xi. 12, 26).

Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. The site is not known. The men of Issachar seem to have been early absorbed in the neighbouring tribes (see vi. 35).

x. 3–5. *Jair.*

3. Jair is the son of Manasseh in Num. xxxii. 41; Deut. iii. 14; 1 Kings iv. 13; but of mixed Manassite and Judahite descent in 1 Chron. ii. 21–2. **Gilead,** according to Num xxvi. 29 ff., &c., was the son of Machir son of Manasseh (cf. v. 14). The **land of Gilead** refers generally in the O.T. to the rich and hilly country east of the Jordan inhabited by Israelites.

4. thirty ass colts. The possession of these asses is a sign of wealth, as in v. 10, xii. 14.

Havvoth-jair: i. e. 'tent-villages of Jair,' a district mentioned in Num. xxxii. 41; Deut. iii. 14; Joshua xiii. 30 (where the villages are said to be sixty in number), and 1 Chron. ii. 23 (cf. verse 22, where the villages are twenty-three in number). According to the Greek version there were thirty-two sons, thirty-two asses, and thirty-two villages.

5 the land of Gilead. And Jair died, and was buried in Kamon.

6 [D] And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baalim, and the Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the chil-

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5. The site of **Kamon** is unknown.

x. 6–18. *Introduction to the story of Jephthah.* The Deuteronomic compiler's introduction to the story of Jephthah, which is contained in verses 6–8 and continued in verses 17–18, is much enlarged by the introduction of matter (verses 9–16) found in his sources, with two or three short additions of a later time. The substance of the whole is that the Israelites (presumably after the death of Gideon) again forsook Yahweh and served other gods. Yahweh was angry and delivered them into the power of the Philistines (of whom we hear nothing more now) and of the Ammonites, who oppressed the Hebrews east of the Jordan for eighteen years. The Ammonites even crossed the Jordan and raided the lands of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. As usual under these circumstances the Israelites repented of their faithlessness. Yahweh reproached them, but was sorry for them when they had put away the strange gods. After this return to Yahweh the Ammonites were camped in Gilead, while the Gileadites met in Mizpah and took counsel as to who could lead them against the enemy. This naturally introduces Jephthah in the next chapter.

x. 6–9. The constantly recurring Deuteronomic formula (see Introd.), with the names of gods, enemies, and part of the Hebrew people oppressed on this occasion.

6. For the **Baalim** see ii. 11; for the **Ashtaroth** see ii. 13.

the gods of Syria (or 'Aram): i. e. of the country north of Palestine from Phoenicia to the Euphrates, Damascus being the best known city in it. The chief gods of this land were Haddād and Rammān (called Rimmōn in the O. T.) and a goddess 'Athar.

the gods of Zidon: i. e. of Phoenicia, the name of the chief town being put for the whole, as in Homer. Phoenician worship was akin to Syrian. The names of many of their gods are found in the inscriptions discovered in the country, and in the Phoenician settlement of Carthage. The worship of their gods was introduced into Israel again at the time of Jezebel.

the gods of Moab. Chemosh was the chief (1 Kings xi. 33, &c., and in the inscription on the Moabite Stone of the ninth century B.C.).

dren of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and
they forsook the LORD, and served him not. And the 7
anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold
them into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand
of the children of Ammon. And they vexed and op- 8
pressed the children of Israel that year: eighteen years
oppressed they all the children of Israel that were beyond
Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead.
And the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight 9
also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the
house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed.

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the gods of the children of Ammon, among whom was Molech (1 Kings xi. 7, 33; 2 Kings xxiii. 10, &c.).

the gods of the Philistines. These, such as Dagon and Baal-zebub, were Canaanitish deities adopted by the Philistines when they settled in the land. All the above were varying forms of nature-worship.

7. Philistines. See xiii. 1.

the children of Ammon, or Ammonites, formerly possessed the land east of the Jordan between the Arnon and Jabbok, but had been driven further eastward by Amorites, just before the Hebrews came on the scene. The Amorites were at any rate partially dispossessed in turn by two Hebrew tribes, but the Ammonites still claimed this land as theirs (see xi. 13 ff.). In Gen. xix. 38 they are allowed to be akin to the Hebrews.

8. The first half of the verse reads, 'And they crushed and oppressed the children of Israel in that year, eighteen years,' where the first indication of time 'in that year' was in the earlier book, and the 'eighteen years' is the Deuteronomist's usual indication of the length of the period of oppression. Through some fault in the text the two are now placed without sense together.

in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead: i. e. in the disputed territory mentioned in the preceding note.

9. Not only did the Ammonites trouble the Hebrews who had settled in their old territory between the Arnon and Jabbok, but they crossed the Jordan and raided Central Palestine, the hill-country of Ephraim including the land of Benjamin, and the north of Judah. They would thus follow very much the same route as the Moabites in iii. 12 ff., but pushed further into the country.

10 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying,
We have sinned against thee, even because we have for-
11 saken our God, and have served the Baalim. And the
LORD said unto the children of Israel, *Did* not *I save you*
from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the chil-
12 dren of Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians
also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress
you; and ye cried unto me, and I saved you out of their
13 hand. Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods:
14 wherefore I will save you no more. Go and cry unto the
gods which ye have chosen; let them save you in the
15 time of your distress. And the children of Israel said
unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us what-
soever seemeth good unto thee; only deliver us, we pray
16 thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from
among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was
grieved for the misery of Israel.

17 Then the children of Ammon were gathered together,
and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel

11, 12. The latter part of verse 11 lacks a verb in the Hebrew. We may either adopt the words in italics in the English version, or with the Greek, Latin, and Syriac translators make all the proper names subjects of the verb 'did oppress' in verse 12.

There are seven nations mentioned here, as there are seven sets of strange gods in verse 6, but the lists are not of the same peoples.

the Philistines. No Philistine oppression has been mentioned in our book (unless it is indicated in the story of Shamgar, iii. 31), but the Samson stories may have come before Jephthah's in the source from which this is taken; otherwise it is a late and mistaken addition.

the children of Ammon must have been added later, as the Hebrews had not yet been delivered from them. Of an oppression by **the Zidonians** we have no account at all. The **Maonites** do not appear in Hebrew history until much later (1 Chron. iv. 41; 2 Chron. xx. 1), and probably the Greek translation is right in reading 'Midianites' (see the story of Gideon).

17, 18. These two verses seem to be intended by the editor to

assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpah.
And the people, the princes of Gilead, said one to an- 18
other, What man is he that will begin to fight against the
children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

[J] Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of **11**
valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead
begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and 2
when his wife's sons grew up, they drave out Jephthah,
and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's
house; for thou art the son of another woman. Then 3
Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land
of Tob: and there were gathered vain fellows to Jephthah,
and they went out with him.

And it came to pass after a while, that the children of 4

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be an introduction to the story of Jephthah. The material of them is all contained in the next chapter.

xi. 1—xii. 7. *Jephthah.*

xi. 1-3. *The early years of Jephthah.* Jephthah was a Gileadite because he lived in the land of Gilead, but as the son of a harlot (not of a legitimate concubine) he had no legal standing in a tribe. The words from 'and Gilead begat Jephthah' to the end of verse 2 do not belong to the original story, for **Gilead** was properly the name of a land, and is treated as the name of a person only in late writings (P and Chron.), and the word used for 'begat' belongs to the language of this later time.

3. Jephthah fled (cf. verse 7) . . . **and dwelt in the land of Tob.** Men of Tob are employed by the Ammonites against David (2 Sam. x. 6, 8). There was a slaughter of Jews in the land of Tubias (probably the same as Tob) in the time of Judas Maccabaeus (1 Macc. v. 13), and certain Jews are called Tubieni (men of Tob) in 2 Macc. xii. 17, but all we can gather from these passages is that Tob was somewhere near Gilead.

vain fellows. See ix. 4.

they went out with him, that is, on raiding expeditions.

xi. 4-11. *Jephthah chosen to lead the Gileadites.*

4. The Ammonites, who according to x. 17 were encamped in

5 Ammon made war against Israel. And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the
6 land of Tob: and they said unto Jephthah, Come and be our chief, that we may fight with the children of Ammon.
7 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and drive me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?
8 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore are we turned again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight with the children of Ammon, and thou shalt
9 be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight with the children of Ammon, and the
10 LORD deliver them before me, shall I be your head? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The LORD shall be witness between us; surely according to thy word so

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Gilead, now began to be active, that is, began making raids on the Hebrew towns and villages.

5. In consequence of this activity the Hebrew elders were compelled to hasten in the selection of a leader. The pressing need overcame any scruples that had been felt about the great fighter Jephthah, whom they had driven away themselves from his country, and they went to the land of Tob to secure his services.

6. The invitation at first was apparently only to the leadership in this war. They wished to hire him as they would any other mercenary.

7. But Jephthah still smarted under the condition of exile in which he lived. He was married and had a daughter, and did not wish to serve Gilead and return to banishment.

8. The elders understood his feelings, and repeated their wish that he should lead them in war, and promised him the headship over Gilead.

9. Jephthah would have no ambiguity, but stated the conditions clearly—he is to be and remain head of Gilead after he has re-established peace.

10. These terms are accepted by the elders, and (verse 11) afterwards confirmed by the people when Jephthah comes before them.

will we do. Then Jephthah went with the elders of 11
Gilead, and the people made him head and chief over
them: and Jephthah spake all his words before the
LORD in Mizpah.

And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the 12
children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with
me, that thou art come unto me to fight against my land?
And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto 13
the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away
my land, when he came up out of Egypt, from Arnon
even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore

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xi. 12–28. *Jephthah's correspondence with the king of the Ammonites.* Before beginning actual warfare Jephthah makes clear his new position as head of the Gileadites (as distinct from that of merely a leader in war) by exchanging messages—as one king with another—with the Ammonite king. 'What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come unto me to fight against my land?' The reply of the Ammonite king is that when the Hebrews came up from Egypt they seized his territory between Arnon, Jabbok, and Jordan, and that he claims its restoration. To this Jephthah replies that the Hebrews took no land of Moab or Ammon; that even when prevented from traversing Edomite territory they did not attack the Edomites, but made a wide detour to the east until they came north of the Arnon; that north of the Arnon they found Amorites who refused them a passage, and whom therefore they fought and overcame. It was the territory of these Amorites that the Hebrews took possession of. Jephthah further bids the Ammonite be satisfied with what Chemosh his god has given him, and not interfere with what Yahweh the God of the Hebrews has done for His people. Is he better than Balak, king of Moab, who did not dare to fight against the Hebrews? Why too have the Ammonites waited these three hundred years, since the Hebrew conquest, before claiming this territory as theirs? Therefore—he sums up in saying—you are in the wrong, and Yahweh shall judge the matter between us.

The Ammonite king refused to pay attention to Jephthah's arguments.

13. The land in dispute was the low hill-country and moorland north of the Arnon, and extending to the Jabbok. The Arnon (now Wadi el-Mujib) flows from east to west through a ravine, which in places is 1,700 feet deep and two miles wide, into the

14 restore those *lands* again peaceably. And Jephthah sent
messengers again unto the king of the children of Am-
15 mon: and he said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah: Is-
rael took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the
16 children of Ammon: but when they came up from Egypt,
and Israel walked through the wilderness unto the Red
17 Sea, and came to Kadesh; then Israel sent messengers

Dead Sea. The Jabbok (now Nahr ez-Zerka) flows into the Jordan about forty-five miles north of the mouth of the Arnon. After the conquest of this district by the Hebrews it was allotted to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Two varying accounts of the parts occupied by them are given in Num. xxxii. 34 ff. (E) and Joshua xiii. 15 ff. (P). Both these tribes must have had a precarious existence owing to the constant attacks of Moabites. Reuben seems to have succumbed, and is not mentioned in the inscription on the Moabite Stone (ninth century).

xi. 14–22. *Jephthah's summary of the dealings of the Hebrews with the Moabites when they came up from Egypt.*

It is strange to find here that in an argument with Ammonites all this historic recapitulation is concerning Moab. This is, however, in accordance with the narratives in Deut. ii and Num. xx, xxi, where Moab formerly occupied the land between Arnon, Jabbok, and Jordan, which however had been taken from them by the Amorites, from whom the Hebrews took it, allotting it to Reuben and Gad. The Ammonites occupied the country between the upper Arnon and upper Jabbok to the east of this land (Deut. ii. 19; Num. xxi. 24). They were closely related to the Moabites according to Hebrew tradition (Gen. xix. 37, 38, J). It is probable that the author who collected the traditions of Jephthah, finding in them that the Ammonites claimed this district, but knowing of no history to support such a claim, inserted the account of their brother-people Moab, thus implying that they were practically one people.

The account in these verses is abridged from the source which is used and expanded in Num. xx, xxi, and in part preserves the same phrases. Compare with verse 17, Num. xx. 1, 14, 17, 21; with verse 18, Num. xxi. 4, 11, 13; with verse 19, Num. xxi. 21, 22; with verses 20-22, Num. xxi. 23, 24.

(For the account in Deut. ii, see the commentaries on that book.)

16. Kadesh, often called Kadesh-barnea, now called 'Ain-Ḳadīs, is in the Negeb about fifty miles south of Beer-sheba. According to early tradition (JE in Numbers), it was the centre

unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass
through thy land: but the king of Edom hearkened not.
And in like manner he sent unto the king of Moab: but
he would not: and Israel abode in Kadesh. Then he 18
walked through the wilderness, and compassed the land
of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east
side of the land of Moab, and they pitched on the other
side of Arnon; but they came not within the border of
Moab, for Arnon was the border of Moab. And Israel 19
sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the
king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass,
we pray thee, through thy land unto my place. But Sihon 20
trusted not Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon
gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz,
and fought against Israel. And the Lord, the God of 21
Israel, delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand
of Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all
the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country.
And they possessed all the border of the Amorites, from 22
Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even
unto Jordan. So now the Lord, the God of Israel, hath 23
dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel,

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of Hebrew life during the forty years in the desert (but compare Deut. ii. 14).

17 ff. The Hebrews journeyed to the east of Edom (see v. 4) and of Moab; then crossed the upper Arnon and invaded and conquered the Amorite country between the Ammonites on the east and the Jordan on the west.

19. Heshbon, now Hesbān, about sixteen miles east of the Jordan, and about twelve southwards from ʻAmmān.

20. Jahaz (Num. xxi. 23; Deut. ii. 32) is mentioned several times in the O. T., but its position is unknown.

22. the wilderness is mentioned as the eastern boundary of the Hebrew conquest, but the Ammonites were on the eastern boundary (see above), so that they are conceived of as living in the desert, or are ignored here.

23, 24. Yahweh has given us this land, Chemosh has given

24 and shouldest thou possess them? Wilt not thou possess
that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So
whomsoever the LORD our God hath dispossessed from
25 before us, them will we possess. And now art thou any
thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab?
did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight
26 against them? While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her
towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities
that are along by the side of Arnon, three hundred years;
wherefore did ye not recover them within that time?
27 I therefore have not sinned against thee, but thou doest
me wrong to war against me: the LORD, the Judge, be
judge this day between the children of Israel and the
28 children of Ammon. Howbeit the king of the children
of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah
which he sent him.

29 Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and
he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over
Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed

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you (i. e. Moab, for Chemosh was Moab's god) what you possess. Do not interfere with what the gods have arranged.

25. The story of Balak ben Zippor is given in Num. xxii. 2 ff. (E).

26. Heshbon and her towns: i. e. and the villages governed from Heshbon (see verse 19).

Aroer, now 'Arā'ir, on the edge of the northern bank of the ravine of the Arnon.

by the side of Arnon. The Greek version has 'Jordan' instead of 'Arnon.'

three hundred years. The sum of the years mentioned in the chronology of this book up to the beginning of the Ammonite oppression is three hundred and one years.

xi. 29–33. *Jephthah's campaign against the Ammonites.*

29. the spirit of the LORD. See iii. 10. The ratification of Jephthah's appointment as 'head and chief' by the people must have taken place at Mizpah. As the mention of this event in verse 11 anticipated his journey from the land of Tob through Gilead and Manasseh to Mizpah in this verse, the author has

over unto the children of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed 30
a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver
the children of Ammon into mine hand, then it shall be, 31
that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to
meet me, when I return in peace from the children of
Ammon, it shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for
a burnt offering. So Jephthah passed over unto the chil- 32
dren of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord de-
livered them into his hand. And he smote them from 33
Aroer until thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities,
and unto Abel-cheramim, with a very great slaughter.
So the children of Ammon were subdued before the
children of Israel.

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apparently removed the words 'and Jephthah spake all his words before the Lord in Mizpah' from the end of verse 31, where they naturally belong to verse 11. The course of events would thus be: Jephthah, having been appointed head by the elders in the land of Tob (verses 5–10), came down to Gilead and Manasseh and to Mizpeh of Gilead, where his appointment was ratified by the people (verse 11), and he vowed his vow before Yahweh (verses 30, 31 and 11^{b}), then from Mizpeh he went to the Ammonites (verse 29^{c}).

30. Jephthah vowed a vow. Other vows mentioned in the O. T. are those of Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 20 ff.), Hannah (1 Sam. i. 11), Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 8).

31. whatsoever must be read as in the margin, 'whosoever.' A human sacrifice is evidently intended.

33. Aroer. The best-known place of this name is the Aroer on the north bank of the Arnon ravine. This is not suitable here, and it is more probably the 'Aroer that is before Rabbah' of Joshua xiii. 25 (i. e. east of the present Ammān).

Minnith, according to Eusebius, was a site four miles from Heshbon on the road to the present Ammān, but this position does not seem suitable here. Various other names are given in the Greek version here.

even twenty cities—awkward grammatically. It may indicate the number of cities conquered by Jephthah, or the number of cities between Aroer and Minnith.

Abel-cheramim ('a meadow of vineyards') is unknown. Eusebius says it was six miles from Ammān, but mentions two other places of similar name.

34 And Jephthah came to Mizpah unto his house, and,
behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels
and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her
35 he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass,
when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas,
my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou
art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my
36 mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. And she
said unto him, My father, thou hast opened thy mouth
unto the LORD; do unto me according to that which hath
proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath
taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the
37 children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let
this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that

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xi. 34-40. *The sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter.*

34. with timbrels and with dances, i. e. dancing to the accompaniment of small drums, or tambourines, played by women who were with her. The custom of women celebrating victories by dances is mentioned in Exod. xv. 20 (Miriam) and in 1 Sam. xviii. 6 f. (the women who met Saul).

35. he rent his clothes: a usual custom among the Hebrews for expressing grief, and still done in the East (cf. Gen. xxxvii. 29; 2 Sam. xiii. 19, &c.).

The Hebrew of the latter part of this verse is stronger than the English. It means, 'Thou hast bowed me down (taken the strength from my limbs, so that I sink to the ground as in v. 27), and thou (emphatic) art among those who trouble me.' Jephthah seems to think of those who had troubled him in the past—his father's sons (verse 2), the elders of Gilead (verse 7), and probably his own restless followers (verse 3). Now he has come back to his own land in honour, to live in peace with his only child (note how this is emphasized in verse 34), and *she* is now the cause (innocently enough) of his greatest grief.

I cannot go back. The vow had been too solemn, the answer too striking.

36. She knew her father's grief was for some hard fate for herself, whether someone told her what it was or not. The answer is one of noble resignation with joyful triumph.

37, 38. One favour only Jephthah's daughter asks and obtains —that on the mountains with her companions she may mourn

I may depart and go down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my companions. And he said, Go. 38
And he sent her away for two months: and she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two 39
months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she had not known man. And it was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to celebrate the 40
daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

And the men of Ephraim were gathered together, and **12**
passed northward; and they said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will

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that she is to be cut off by death from the hope, so strong among Hebrew women, of having children.

39. Unlike the Greek tragedian (Aeschylus in the *Agamemnon*, describing the sacrifice of Iphigenia), the Hebrew writer draws a veil over the final act, only lamenting again that she died, and with her passed away the hope of continuing the family.

40. the daughters of Israel, i. e. probably of Gilead. Like other local customs this probably passed away as time deprived it of its meaning.

xii. 1–6. *Gilead against Ephraim.* Again, as after Gideon's success (viii. 1–3), the Ephraimites feel that their superiority has been attacked by the fact that a member of another tribe should have taken upon himself the punishment of invaders without consulting them. They threaten to burn his house over his head. Gideon was a quiet man, and had made peace with them by politic speech. Jephthah was a man of fighting by profession, and his spirit was in bitterness over the destruction of his happiness by the imminent or recent loss of his only child. He answers them with fierce but true words, gathers round him men of Gilead who had suffered from the taunts of Ephraimites before, and inflicts a heavy punishment on the Ephraimites who had ventured to cross the Jordan.

1. northward, i. e. to the fords of the Jordan, south of the Sea of Galilee, or *to Zaphon*, as in margin. Zaphon in Joshua xiii. 27 is in the territory of Gad, probably between Succoth and the Sea of Galilee.

2 burn thine house upon thee with fire. And Jephthah
said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with
the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye saved
3 me not out of their hand. And when I saw that ye saved
me not, I put my life in my hand, and passed over against
the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them
into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me
4 this day, to fight against me? Then Jephthah gathered
together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim:
and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said,
Ye are fugitives of Ephraim, ye Gileadites, in the midst
5 of Ephraim, *and* in the midst of Manasseh. And the
Gileadites took the fords of Jordan against the Ephraimites:
and it was so, that when *any of* the fugitives of
Ephraim said, Let me go over, the men of Gilead said unto
6 him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; then said
they unto him, Say now Shibboleth; and he said Sibboleth;
for he could not frame to pronounce it right;
then they laid hold on him, and slew him at the fords
of Jordan: and there fell at that time of Ephraim forty
and two thousand.

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2. I called you. This was not mentioned in the previous accounts.

4. We cannot tell how soon these events occurred after Jephthah's victory over the Ammonites. The Gileadites, who dispersed after the battles, were easily gathered again. The latter part of this verse is quite unintelligible to us. The Gileadites, according to the genealogies, are a branch of Manasseh, and cannot be 'fugitives of Ephraim.' Either the words are in the wrong place here or the text is corrupt. The whole passage is omitted in some Greek MSS.

5, 6. the fords, &c., see iii. 28. There were already differences of pronunciation among the Hebrew tribes. The Ephraimite pronounced *sh* as *s*, so that his manner of pronouncing the word Shibboleth (which means 'an ear of corn') betrayed him.

Although the slaughter extended probably over a considerable time, the numbers must be, as usual, greatly exaggerated.

And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died 7
Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in *one of* the
cities of Gilead.

And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel. 8
And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters he sent 9
abroad, and thirty daughters he brought in from abroad
for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. And 10
Ibzan died, and was buried at Beth-lehem.

And after him Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel; and 11
he judged Israel ten years. And Elon the Zebulunite 12
died, and was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

And after him Abdon the son of Hillel the Pira- 13

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7. in *one of* **the cities of Gilead.** The Hebrew is 'in the cities of Gilead.' The Greek reads 'in his city in Gilead,' the Latin 'in his city Gilead,' the Syriac 'in a city of Gilead.'

xii. 8–15. *Ibzan, Elon and Abdon.* Three so-called minor judges are now mentioned. Their stories show the same characteristics as the accounts of Tola and Jair (x. 1–5). They do not save the Israelites from any enemy, but simply exercise authority or influence over their peoples. Their names and what is known about them seems to have been derived from their tombs, which are always mentioned. The chronology is the one thing which has led to the introduction of these men. (See Introd. p. 13 f.)

8. Ibzan. The name does not occur anywhere but here, and its meaning is unknown. Josephus thought that the **Beth-lehem** referred to here was Beth-lehem of Judah, but it was more probably the city of Zebulun mentioned in Joshua xix. 15, which still retains its name in Arabic form (Beit-Lahm), and is about seven miles from Nazareth, west of Seffūrīeh.

Ibzan had thirty sons, all of whom he married to wives from other clans, and thirty daughters, whom he likewise married. By the connexions thus established he was a man of importance, and these facts were probably recorded on his tomb.

11, 12. Elon (meaning 'a terebinth') occurs in Gen. xlvi. 14 and Num. xxvi. 26 as the name of a clan of Zebulun. Here the progenitor of the clan is probably intended. The name of his burying-place, **Aijalon,** is only another pronunciation of the same name.

13, 14. Abdon. The name Abdon occurs twice in the genealogy of Benjamin, 1 Chron. viii. 23, 30, but there is nothing to connect

14 thonite judged Israel. And he had forty sons and thirty sons' sons, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and
15 he judged Israel eight years. And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

13 [D] And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

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it with the 'judge' who is mentioned here only. The name **Hillel** does not occur again in the O. T.

Pirathon, according to verse 15, is in the land of Ephraim (cf. 1 Chron. xxvii. 14). It is generally thought to be the modern Fer'atā, on the top of a high rock south-west of Nablūs (Shechem).

15. in the hill country of the Amalekites. There is an allusion here to some connexion of a part of Ephraim's territory, which escapes us for want of information. See v. 14.

xiii. 1—xvi. 31. *Samson.*

1. The Deuteronomic transition formula. Cf. ii. 11, iii. 7, 12, vi. 1, x. 6.

the Philistines were, like the Hebrews, invaders and settlers in Palestine. Rameses III (about 1200 B.C.), according to an Egyptian inscription, had to fight against a number of foreign tribes who were specially active in Syria. He is said to have defeated them both on sea and land. Of these tribes, one is named that of the Pu-ra-sa-ti, and it seems probable that these were the Philistines. Hebrew tradition said they came from Caphtor, which has been variously explained as Cappadocia, Cyprus, Crete, or the Delta of Egypt. The evidence of the monuments seems to favour Asia Minor as their original home. As they did not practise circumcision (1 Sam. xviii. 25 ff.) they were probably neither Semites nor Egyptians by race. Just at the time when they are mentioned in the Egyptian records the Egyptian power was weak in Palestine, and their invasion was thus made easier. The district they occupy in the story of Samson is the low-lying land on the Mediterranean coast from Gaza on the south to near Jaffa on the north. On the east were the low hills (the Shephelah, see i. 9) which led up to the highlands of Judah and Benjamin. It was probably owing to the Philistine occupation of some of these low hills that the Danites were unable to effect a settlement in the territory allotted to them, and so migrated (xviii). The plains, which they chiefly settled in, contained several

[J] And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the 2
family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his
wife was barren, and bare not. And the angel of the 3
Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold
now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt
conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray 4
thee, and drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not
any unclean thing: for, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear 5

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ancient cities, Gaza, Gath, Ashkelon, &c., which are mentioned in the Amarna letters (about 1400 B. C.), and the great high-road from Egypt and Arabia to Syria and the north passed through them. The towns were therefore centres of a much higher civilization than that of either the Philistines or the Hebrews.

xiii. 2-24. *Events connected with the birth of Samson.*

2. Zorah in xviii. 2, 8, 11, as in Joshua xix. 41, is a Danite city, but in the later passage, Joshua xv. 33, as in 2 Chron. xi. 10, it is assigned to Judah, for when these latter passages were written a part of the Danites had migrated to the north (xviii) and the rest had been absorbed in the tribe of Judah. Zorah is the modern Ṣur'ah, about seventeen miles west of Jerusalem, and situated on a hill 800 feet above the valley of Sorek, through which the railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem now runs. Beth-shemesh was on the south side of the valley opposite Zorah.

of the family of the Danites, rather 'of the clan,' &c. For the Danites see xviii. 1.

The name **Manoah** (meaning 'rest,' or 'place of rest') occurs only in this story, unless it is reproduced in the 'Menuhoth' and 'Manahathites' of 1 Chron. ii. 52, 54.

3-7. The angel of Yahweh appears to Manoah's wife, who is barren, promises her the birth of a son, and gives directions as to his training. She tells her husband.

3. For the **angel of the LORD,** who appears evidently in human form and unrecognized, see ii. 1.

but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. These words are very awkward grammatically in Hebrew, and seem to be an interpolation. The announcement of the conception and birth are made in verse 5.

4. wine and **strong drink** are often used together in the O. T. (and so in Luke i. 15, reproduced from Num. vi. 3) to denote all intoxicating liquors. The Hebrew word 'shekar' (strong drink) includes intoxicating drinks made from grains, fruits, or honey.

any unclean thing. The laws as to unclean things in a son; and no razor shall come upon his head: for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Phi-

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Deut. xiv and Lev. xi belong to periods centuries later than this (though they may contain some older customs), and so cannot be used here. We may, however, judge that the expression refers to certain animals forbidden as food, and carrion generally (cf. Exod. xxii. 31, E).

5. thou shalt conceive, and bear a son: better, as in Gen. xvi. 11, 'thou art with child, and shalt bear a son.'

no razor shall come upon his head: for the child shall be a Nazirite. The laws concerning the Nazarite are given in Num. vi, but it must be remembered that these belong to a code that was issued some 600 years after the events of this chapter. Moreover, there are some striking differences between the conditions in the two passages. Here the Nazariteship is for life, in Numbers for a period only; here the child is a Nazarite by the consecration of his mother, in the later work by a voluntary vow undertaken by the person himself; here the hair is never to be cut, but in the Code it is to be cut off and offered to Yahweh at the expiration of the period of Nazariteship. The characteristics of Samson's Nazariteship are that he is a devotee, devoted to Yahweh all his life, and that his hair is never to be cut. His mother is forbidden by the angel of Yahweh 'to eat of anything that cometh of the vine,' or 'to drink wine or strong drink,' or 'to eat any unclean thing' (verse 14), but we are not told that Samson himself observed the same injunctions. The account of the 'drinking-feast' (xiv. 10) does not suggest an abstinence from wine or strong drink.

The importance attached to the hair is common not only to such primitive peoples as the Australians, but also to more advanced races as the Persians and Greeks. It was so closely connected with a man's personal being that to offer it to a god was to offer part of one's self, and to keep it uncut was to preserve one's own life in its fullest strength. (Interesting examples of this belief will be found in any anthropological work.)

he shall begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. These words probably explain why the writer who first united the two sets of traditions of Hebrew heroes introduced the story of Samson into his work. Samuel was the real deliverer of the Israelites from the Philistine oppression, and his story was probably in the pre-Deuteronomic Book of Judges, but as the wild actions of Samson among the Philistines did to some extent benefit the Hebrews who lived on their border, the writer

listines. Then the woman came and told her husband, 6
saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance
was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible; and I asked him not whence he was, neither told
he me his name: but he said unto me, Behold, thou 7
shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine
nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: for the
child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb to the
day of his death. Then Manoah intreated the Lord, and 8
said, Oh Lord, I pray thee, let the man of God whom
thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what
we shall do unto the child that shall be born. And God 9
hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God
came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but

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copies his story, although he cannot say that the Philistines 'were subdued before the children of Israel' (xi. 33) or that 'the land had rest' (viii. 28) in the days of Samson.

6. A man of God, i. e. either a man of superhuman appearance, or more probably one of those men who, claiming superior knowledge of God's intentions, appeared from time to time to historic personages to deliver messages from God (cf. 1 Sam. ii. 27; Judges vi. 7). Such men probably wandered from place to place, like some of the dervishes among the Arabs and fakirs in India to-day.

The woman describes this one as of awe-inspiring appearance, making her think of the stories of Yahweh as He appeared in human form. The fact that she did not ask his name (the first question put to a stranger in the East) shows the impression he made upon her.

xiii. 8-23. *Manoah's interview with the angel.* Manoah naturally wishes to see the man who has made this strange communication to his wife. The angel appears again to the woman and waits until she brings her husband, who questions him and offers him hospitality. The angel declines this, but suggests a sacrifice, which Manoah offers. In the flame of the sacrifice the angel ascends and disappears. Manoah and his wife now realize that they have seen God, and fear death as the consequence, but are comforted by the thought that Yahweh would not have treated them so well if He had intended to slay them.

10 Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman
made haste, and ran, and told her husband, and said
unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that
11 came unto me the *other* day. And Manoah arose, and
went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto
him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman?
12 And he said, I am. And Manoah said, Now let thy
words come to pass: what shall be the manner of the
13 child, and *what shall be* his work? And the angel of the
LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the
14 woman let her beware. She may not eat of any thing that
cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong
drink, nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her
15 let her observe. And Manoah said unto the angel of
the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, that we may
16 make ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the LORD
said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not
eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt make ready a burnt
offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah
17 knew not that he was the angel of the LORD. And
Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy
name, that when thy words come to pass we may do thee

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12. The verse means: 'Granted that thy word comes true, what will be the manner of life of the boy and his action?' i. e. How is he to be trained, and what ought he to do?

The next two verses are not an answer to Manoah's question. The angel only tells him that his wife must be careful to observe his previous commands as to food and drink. The commands are enlarged here by the addition of abstinence from everything connected with the vine.

15, 16. Manoah offers the same form of hospitality to the angel as Gideon had done (see vi. 18 f.), but this time the angel definitely declines a meal, and proposes a burnt offering (to consist of the food offered to him) to Yahweh.

bread: here in the general sense of food.

17, 18. Manoah asks the angel his name, that, when (or 'if') his words come true, he may honour him (in some way not

honour? And the angel of the LORD said unto him, 18
Wherefore askest thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful? So Manoah took the kid with the meal offering, 19
and offered it upon the rock unto the LORD: and *the angel* did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on.
For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven 20
from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar: and Manoah and his wife looked
on; and they fell on their faces to the ground. But the 21
angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah or to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of
the LORD. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall 22

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mentioned). The angel replies that his name would be beyond his power to understand. Jacob had asked God His name when he wrestled with Him, but had not been satisfied (Gen. xxxii. 29). These two verses seem to be the continuation of verse 14, while verse 16 is continued in verse 19.

xiii. 19, 20. *The sacrifice.*

19. with the meal offering. As the meal offering was a necessary accompaniment of the burnt offering in the later legislation (Num. xv. 8-9, P), but not so in earlier practice, these words may have been added here (and in verse 23) to make Manoah's sacrifice correct according to the later idea.

upon the rock, which was generally used by Manoah as an altar.

and *the angel* did wondrously. The words 'the angel' are not in the text, which simply has 'and doing wondrously,' which does not make sense. It is better to change the conjunction into the definite article (a change of one letter in Hebrew), when the words then become attributive to the word Yahweh which precedes—'they offered it upon the rock to Yahweh who works wondrously.' A similar expression is used of Yahweh in Exod. xv. 11 and Ps. lxxvii. 14.

The last words of the verse, **and Manoah and his wife looked on,** were probably put in here by a copyist's mistake from the next verse.

20. For (*lit.* 'And') **it came to pass, when the flame** (of the sacrifice) kindled by Manoah went up heavenwards, the angel went up in the altar-flame as Manoah and his wife looked on.

22. It was a firm belief at this time that to see God was death

23 surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meal offering at our hand, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would at this time have told such
24 things as these. And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD
25 blessed him. And the spirit of the LORD began to move him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

14 And Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman

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for man (cf. vi. 22 f.), although He is represented in stories of older times as having walked and talked familiarly with men.

24. The earliest form of the name in Hebrew was Shamshōn, which has come into English from the Greek through the Latin. The Hebrew text contains a later form, Shimshōn. The name is derived from Shemesh, meaning 'Sun,' and probably denotes 'sunny' or 'Sun's man.' That the Sun was worshipped in this part of the country seems clear from the name of the city Beth-shemesh (i. e. 'Abode of the Sun,' like Beth-el, 'Abode of El'), just opposite Zorah. Considering the importance of Hebrew names, it seems inconceivable that a Hebrew mother should give such a name to her child if his birth had been associated with a revelation of Yahweh.

25. the spirit of the LORD in the story of Samson is an irresistible impulse accompanied by unusual physical strength (cf. xiv. 19, xv. 14).

began to move him or to disturb him. The verb used here occurs only in four other passages. In three of them it denotes the disturbance of spirit caused by dreams (Gen. xli. 8; Dan. ii. 1, 3), and in Ps. lxxvii. 4 of agitation caused by trouble and the thought of God. Generally when the spirit of Yahweh came on a man he did some violent deed at once, but here it is associated only with a general excitement or disturbance of mind, which must have shown itself in some noticeable manner as the exact place of its occurrence is mentioned.

Eshtaol is generally associated with Zorah (Joshua xv. 33, xix. 41; Judges xvi. 31, xviii. 2, 11; cf. 1 Chron. ii. 53), and was only about a mile and a half to the east of it (the modern Eshu'a). Thus the exact position intended by the author of 'Dan's camp' is known. A place of this name is mentioned later (see xviii. 12).

xiv. In this and the following chapter is narrated a series of events connected with Samson's attachment to a woman in

in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. And he 2
came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I
have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the
Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then 3
his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a

Timnah. Samson asks his father to secure this woman for him as a wife, but the father objects to her as a stranger, and apparently will not receive her into his house. Samson then contracts with her an irregular marriage, whereby she remains in her house and he visits her when he will. On the way to Timnah on one occasion he kills a lion, and returning to Zorah finds honey in the carcase of the slain beast. Some time shortly afterwards he gives a feast ('for so used the young men to do') to his Philistine acquaintances in Timnah, and during its continuance proposes a riddle. The Philistines threaten Samson's wife with punishment unless she persuades him to tell her the solution of the riddle, and by this means are able to win their wager from Samson. He, however, in anger leaves the woman and kills thirty Philistines in Ashkelon. The woman gives him up and joins another man.

1. **Timnah** (the modern Tibnah) was about three and a half miles south-west of Zorah, among the hills on the south side of the valley of Sorek. It is mentioned in Gen. xxxviii. 12 ff. In Joshua xix. 43 it is ascribed to Dan, and in xv. 10 to Judah. It is mentioned again in 2 Chron. xxviii. 18 among the cities which the Philistines had reconquered in the time of Ahaz.

Samson, on a visit to Timnah, saw a Philistine woman, whom he wished to have as wife. He asked his father to arrange the matter with her parents. Manoah protested against his taking a foreigner as wife. All Samson's adventures are connected with his relations to women. Those with the Timnahite occupy chapters xiv and xv; with the harlot of Gaza xvi. 1–3; with Delilah xvi. 4 ff.

2. In Gen. xxxiv. 4 Shechem makes a similar request to his father.

3. The words **and his mother** have been added (cf. '*my* people'). We have parallels to the verse in Genesis. Thus in xxiv. 3 Abraham makes his servant swear not to take a foreign wife for Isaac; in xxvi. 34 f. Esau's foreign wife is a source of bitterness to Isaac and Rebekah; and in xxvii. 46 and xxviii Isaac charges Jacob not to take a Canaanitish wife. It seems clear that Samson originally intended a regular marriage, with the introduction of his wife into his father's house. This, however, was not carried out. (See xv.)

woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father,
4 Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well. But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD; for he sought an occasion against the Philistines. Now at that time the Philistines had rule over Israel.

5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnah, and came to the vineyards of Timnah: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.
6 And the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had

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the uncircumcised Philistines. The Canaanites seem to have generally practised circumcision, though the Shechemites did not, according to Gen. xxxiv. The term 'the uncircumcised' is often used by itself to denote the Philistines in the O. T. (Judges xv. 18; 1 Sam. xiv. 6, &c.).

she pleaseth me well: *lit.* 'she is agreeable in my eyes.'

4. When the traditions of Samson were written down, the author wrote them, not as a modern folklorist would do, to illustrate the modes of life and thought of bygone days, but to show how Yahweh wrought for Israel through these heroes. So in this verse he tells us that Yahweh was seeking an opportunity of doing a mischief to the Philistines, and it was part of His plan that Samson should establish relations with the woman of Timnah. His father, the writer tells us, had no knowledge of this. Yahweh's action was due to His care for the interests of His people, for **the Philistines had rule over Israel** (it would be more correct historically to say over the Israelites of that district), and any harm done to them was a benefit to their Hebrew neighbours.

xiv. 5-9. *The occasion that gave rise to a riddle.* The course of events in these verses has been somewhat obscured by the introduction of Samson's father and mother, as if they had agreed to help him. This change in the story may have been made to save Samson from the charge of unfilial conduct.

5, 6. Samson on his way to Timnah met a young lion that roared at him. In a frenzy of superhuman strength he tore it as if it were a kid. His father and mother were not with him, for they know nothing of this incident. The last clause of the verse is probably taken from **9**.

nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his
mother what he had done. And he went down, and 7
talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.
And after a while he returned to take her, and he turned 8
aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there
was a swarm of bees in the body of the lion, and honey.
And he took it into his hands, and went on, eating as he 9
went, and he came to his father and mother, and gave
unto them, and they did eat: but he told them not that
he had taken the honey out of the body of the lion.
And his father went down unto the woman: and Samson 10
made there a feast; for so used the young men to do.
And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they 11
brought thirty companions to be with him. And Samson 12
said unto them, Let me now put forth a riddle unto you:

8, 9. After spending some time at Timnah Samson returned home. On his way he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion, and found in it a swarm of bees and honey. Some of this he ate, some he took home to his father and mother, not telling them, however, whence he had got it.

8. The words **to take her** (i. e. in marriage) are evidently a gloss very badly introduced here. Samson is on his way back to Zorah, whence he goes to Timnah again later for the marriage.

xiv. 10–20. *The feast and its results.*

10. Again the words 'his father' are introduced so as to spoil the sense. Read, 'and Samson went down unto the woman and made there a feast' (the word means literally 'an occasion of drinking'), for the young men of that time were accustomed to give such feasts. At a proper wedding the friends of the bridegroom escorted the bride to her new home and a feast was held there. But it is doubtful whether this was a bridal feast at all, or simply one such as young men gave from time to time to their friends. Samson would very naturally give a feast to the friends of the woman.

11. when they saw him. Some of the Greek MSS. read 'since they feared him.' Some parts of the Hebrew verbs 'to see' and 'to fear' are very much alike. The number of the company explains the number of the garments in the wager.

12. a riddle (as in Ezek. xvii. 2), or 'dark saying' (as in

if ye can declare it me within the seven days of the feast,
and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments
13 and thirty changes of raiment: but if ye cannot declare it
me, then shall ye give me thirty linen garments and thirty
changes of raiment. And they said unto him, Put forth
14 thy riddle, that we may hear it. And he said unto them,

Out of the eater came forth meat,
And out of the strong came forth sweetness.

And they could not in three days declare the riddle.
15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said

Ps. xlix. 4, lxxviii. 2; Prov. i. 6), differed from a parable in that its object was usually to test ingenuity in its solution, while the object of the parable was didactic. If the references in the parable were too obscure it defeated its own purpose, but in the riddle the more difficult it was the better. In ancient times the solution of riddles at feasts was a favourite amusement.

thirty linen garments and thirty changes of raiment. The linen garments, mentioned again in Isa. iii. 23 and Prov. xxxi. 24, are wrappers of linen worn alone as night-garments, or as outer garments in the day. The 'changes of raiment' are festal garments as distinguished from working clothes, and were often given as presents (Gen. xlv. 22; 2 Kings v. 5).

14. The riddle is contained in the first line, the second being formed, as often in Hebrew poetry, by the substitution of new terms for the same objects, 'the strong' for 'the eater,' 'sweetness' for 'meat.' The puzzle is to substitute for the general terms used in the riddle the special ones which will make the statement refer to an actual event. This event is Samson's having taken honey from the lion. As the Philistine guests did not know what had happened, it was not a riddle to be solved by thinking of words, but by crafty action; and by the latter means they were successful.

xiv. 15–18. *How the answer was obtained.* How long the Philistine company tried other means of finding what Samson's riddle meant before they approached the woman of Timnah we cannot tell, because the figures in the text are mutually contradictory. As it stands, the text says they were unable to find it out for *three* days, and on the *seventh* came to the woman. This would be fairly intelligible on the supposition that the riddle was propounded on the third day of the feast; but according to the Greek and Syriac versions it was on the *fourth* day that they

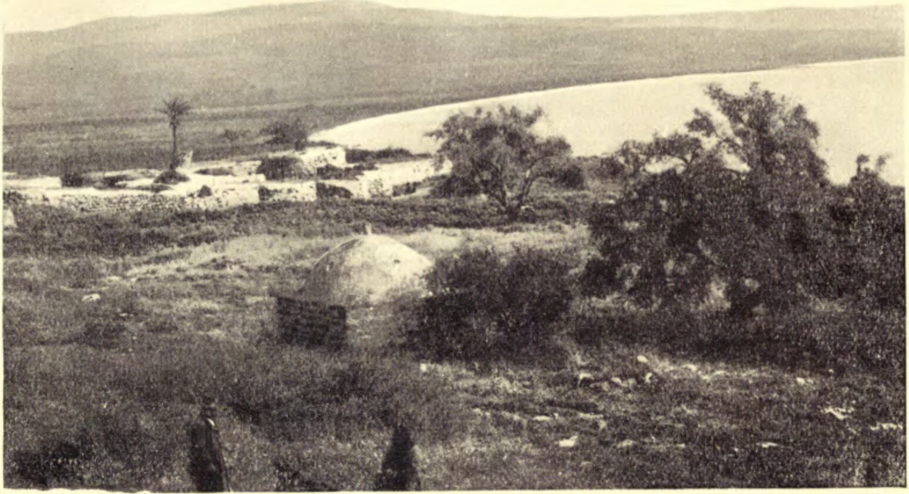

Photo : Photochrom Co.

THE SEA OF CHINNEROTH (GALILEE).

unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to impoverish us? is it not *so*? And Samson's wife wept before him, 16
and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell thee? And she wept before him the seven days, 17
while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she pressed him sore: and she told the riddle to the children of her people. And the men of the city said unto him on the 18
seventh day before the sun went down, What is sweeter

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sought the woman's help. But verse 17 agrees with neither of these, for according to it the woman wept before Samson (in her annoyance because he would not tell her the solution) 'the *seven* days, while the feast lasted,' which would mean that the riddle was propounded the first day, and that the woman was at once told with threats to find out what it meant. Two or three varying traditions may have existed. It is impossible to say what the earliest form of the story was.

15. Entice: the same word is used in xvi. 5, in 2 Sam. iii. 25 (Eng. 'to deceive'), and 1 Kings xxii. 20.

lest we burn thee, &c. The Ephraimites threatened Jephthah with the same punishment (xii. 1). This fate actually met the woman later (xv. 6).

is it not so? These words are very awkward here. They are the translation of one Hebrew word from which a final *m* has been dropped according to some of the Hebrew MSS. and the Chaldee version. The word with this *m* restored means 'hither.' 'Have you invited us hither to impoverish us?'

16, 17. The woman questioned Samson and wept in his presence every day of the feast, but without success, until on the seventh day she made a special effort and **pressed him sore** (so in the Delilah story, xvi. 16), and he told her. She immediately told her friends.

18. before the sun went down. The word translated 'sun' is rare, and generally confined to poetic speech, and the form here used denotes the accusative. Probably it is a mistake for the than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them,

If ye had not plowed with my heifer,
Ye had not found out my riddle.

19 And the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and smote thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave the changes *of raiment* unto them that declared the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.
20 But Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.

15 But it came to pass after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her
2 father would not suffer him to go in. And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee,
3 instead of her. And Samson said unto them, This time shall I be blameless in regard of the Philistines, when I
4 do them a mischief. And Samson went and caught three

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word meaning 'chamber,' and the sentence must be translated 'before he went into the chamber' (cf. xv. 1). The guests waited until the last moment before triumphing over Samson.

xv. 1–19. *A series of feuds resulting from Samson's connexion with the Timnahite woman.*

xv. 1, 2. *Samson is provoked.* Samson goes down to Timnah to visit the woman his friend, but finds that she has been given to a friend. He is offered her younger sister in her place. The nature of the so-called marriage is evident. The woman was not received into the house of Samson's family as a wife, but stays in her own home, where Samson has the right to visit her.

1. in the time of wheat harvest, i.e. about May. This indication of time prepares the way for verse 5.

with a kid: so Judah rewards Tamar. Gen. xxxviii. 17 ff.

xv. 3–5. *Samson's revenge.* Samson this time is calm in his

hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between every two
tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let 5
them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks and the standing corn, and
also the oliveyards. Then the Philistines said, Who hath 6
done this? And they said, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he hath taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and
burnt her and her father with fire. And Samson said 7
unto them, If ye do after this manner, surely I will be
avenged of you, and after that I will cease. And he 8
smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, 9
and spread themselves in Lehi. And the men of Judah 10

---

preparation of mischief. Wrong has been done him, and he has a right to punish. He is not moved by frenzy; no 'spirit of Yahweh' comes upon him. He turns out three hundred foxes, with lighted torches fastened to each pair of tails, into the corn-fields, and the corn, both cut and growing, is destroyed (and the olive trees and vineyards are damaged).

A piece of folklore which cannot be criticized seriously.

xv. 6. *Retaliation of the Philistines.*

6. her and her father should certainly be 'her and her father's house' (i. e. 'family'), as in some Hebrew MSS. and in the Greek and Syriac versions. (Cf. xiv. 15.)

xv. 7, 8. *Samson again smites the Philistines and retires to Etam.*

8. the rock of Etam. A city called Etam is mentioned in 2 Chron. xi. 6 and in the Greek version of Joshua xv. 59^a, in both places associated with Beth-lehem.

xv. 9-19. *Samson at Lehi.* The Philistines are resolved to capture Samson, and send an army into Judah's land. The men of Judah in alarm determine to hand over Samson in bonds to the Philistines. To this Samson agrees, but on arrival at the Philistine camp bursts his bonds and with the jawbone of an ass makes havoc. A city and a well receive their names from his deeds.

9. Lehi (meaning 'a jawbone') was probably in the low-lying

said, Why are ye come up against us? And they said, To
bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath
11 done to us. Then three thousand men of Judah went
down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to
Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers
over us? what then is this that thou hast done unto us?
And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I
12 done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come
down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the
hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them,
Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.
13 And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind
thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely
we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two
14 new ropes, and brought him up from the rock. When
he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met
him: and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon
him, and the ropes that were upon his arms became as
flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands dropped from
15 off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of an ass,

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hills (Shephelah) between the Mediterranean coast plains and the high hill-country of Judah, but the exact district referred to has not been identified.

11. As Samson was a Danite the men of Judah felt themselves under no obligation to protect him at any risk to themselves. The number of men thought necessary for his capture is evidently intended to enhance his reputation.

what then is this that thou hast done unto us? Why have you put us in the awkward position of being charged with concealing an enemy, and so brought this invasion into our territory?

13. new ropes, as in xvi. 11.

14. the spirit of the LORD: see iii. 10.

as flax that was burnt with fire: *lit.* 'which had burned in fire.' His bonds had no more strength than the ashes of flax. Cf. xvi. 9.

15. a new jawbone. The word translated 'new' means 'fresh' (as in Isa. i. 6 marg.), and so here means tough and not dry and

and put forth his hand, and took it, and smote a thousand men therewith. And Samson said, 16

With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps,
With the jawbone of an ass have I smitten a thousand men.

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of 17 speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand; and that place was called Ramath-lehi. And he was sore 18 athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance by the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the

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brittle. Such things are often to be seen lying about in public places in the East. With the jawbone of a camel a follower of Mohammed once killed an unbeliever.

and smote a thousand men therewith. There is a striking resemblance between the exploits of three men among Philistines. In 2 Sam. xxiii. 11 ff. the Philistines were gathered together 'to Lehi' (according to the correct text. The English version has 'into a troop') and Shammah slew the Philistines. In Judges iii. 31 Shamgar slew six hundred Philistines, and here Samson slays a thousand. It is curious that the first half of the heroes' names is the same in each case. (As the vowels were not written in Hebrew the names appear as Shmh, Shmgr, and Shmsn.) It is possible that all are variants of one tradition.

16. The literal translation of this curious verse is:—

With the ass's jawbone, a heap, two (separate) heaps;
With the ass's jawbone I have struck down a thousand men.

In the first line, however, the Greek version seems to be right in pronouncing the last word with different vowels in the Hebrew, and thus making it a verb. It gives a meaning to the word that is unknown in Hebrew: 'I annihilated them.' Keeping the usual meaning we should have for the whole line: 'With the ass's jawbone I heaped them in heaps.' The jingle of the Hebrew (four words have the same consonants) cannot be reproduced in English.

17. that place was called expresses the meaning better than the marginal 'he called that place.'

Ramath-lehi: i. e. 'Jawbone-hill.' The first part of the name is found also in 'Ramoth-gilead' and in Ramoth-negeb (1 Sam. xxx. 27, where the English version has 'Ramoth of the South').

19 uncircumcised. But God clave the hollow place that is in Lehi, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore the name thereof was called En-hakkore, which is in
20 Lehi, unto this day. [D] And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

16 [J] And Samson went to Gaza, and saw there an harlot,
2 and went in unto her. *And it was told* the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the

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18. the uncircumcised: see xiv. 3.

19. the hollow place. The Hebrew word means 'a mortar,' as in Prov. xxvii. 22. Here it is evidently a hollow in the ground, resembling a mortar in shape.

En-hakkore, that is, 'the spring of the caller,' according to this tradition so called because Samson 'called on the Lord.' But 'the caller' is the Hebrew name for the partridge (as in 1 Sam. xxvi. 20; Jer. xvii. 11), and the name originally belonging to this spring was probably 'Partridge Spring.'

20. Here the Deuteronomic editor closes the account of Samson as a judge. Compared with his close to the accounts of other judges (for example in iii. 29, 30, iv. 23, 24, and v. 31^b, viii. 28) it is a meagre record. It is not surprising. The only wonder is how the editor could persuade himself to seriously put the Samson stories in the same category as those of a Deborah and Barak, a Gideon and a Jephthah.

xvi. 1–3. *Samson at Gaza.*

1. Gaza: a fortified town in the plain of the Mediterranean coast, about two miles from the sea, was on the high-road from Egypt to the north, and so was a city of the first importance for centuries before the Philistines gained possession of this district. This importance it retained until its capture by Alexander the Great. The city lies about thirty miles south of Samson's home, but it is quite in accord with the nature of folklore stories to find Samson wandering about freely in the midst of his enemies, far from his home. The latter part of this verse explains how he came to allow himself to be shut up in the city at night.

2. This verse is incomplete and confused. At the beginning it is necessary to supply 'And it was told' (not in the Hebrew). The sentence 'And they surrounded (with no object in Hebrew), and they laid wait for him in the gate of the city,' seems to have city, and were quiet all the night, saying, *Let be* till morning light, then we will kill him. 3 And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and plucked them up, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the mountain that is before Hebron.

4 And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.

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been interpolated later, for it is evident that the Gazites trusted to the gates to keep him from escaping, while they hoped to kill him in the morning.

3. The gate would consist of two doors or wings, each turning on pins and flanked by two posts. The bar was probably put across the wings from post to post, thus making one structure of the whole. Samson carries off this whole mass.

the mountain that is before Hebron, that is, the hill which the traveller from Gaza reaches just before arriving at Hebron. The distance of Hebron from Gaza is about thirty-eight miles.

xvi. 4–22. *Samson's fall and imprisonment.* By a woman Samson is induced to tell the secret of his strength. He is shorn of his long hair and then taken, blinded, and imprisoned by the Philistines.

4. the valley of Sorek is the valley now called Wady es-Surār, which extends from a few miles west of Jerusalem to the coast plains. Zorah, Beth-shemesh, and Timnah were all in this valley (see on xiii. 2).

5. the lords of the Philistines, probably here as in iii. 3 five in number, that is, the lords of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron (Joshua xiii. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 17). According to the latter part of the verse, each of these lords is to pay Delilah about one hundred and fifty pounds sterling for the betrayal of Samson (cf. xvii. 2).

6 And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee,
wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou
7 mightest be bound to afflict thee. And Samson said
unto her, If they bind me with seven green withes that
were never dried, then shall I become weak, and be as
8 another man. Then the lords of the Philistines brought
up to her seven green withes which had not been dried,
9 and she bound him with them. Now she had liers in
wait abiding in the inner chamber. And she said unto
him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he
brake the withes, as a string of tow is broken when it
10 toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known. And
Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me,
and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith
11 thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If they
only bind me with new ropes wherewith no work hath
been done, then shall I become weak, and be as another
12 man. So Delilah took new ropes, and bound him there-with,
and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee,
Samson. And the liers in wait were abiding in the inner
chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a
13 thread. And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou

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xvi. 6-9. *Delilah's first attempt to learn the secret of Samson's strength.* Samson's first answer to the eager questioning of Delilah is that if he is bound with seven cords of fresh sinews, that have not been dried, but are still tough and capable of being knotted closely, his strength will be of no avail. There is also probably some particular power supposed to lie in the number seven. The words 'to afflict thee' must surely have been put in here (verse 6) by mistake from verse 5, for they would have made Samson suspicious, and they do not occur in Delilah's further questionings in verses 10, 13. Philistines were lying in wait in the chamber to see what would happen. Doubtless they remained there on this and the next two occasions.

xvi. 10-12. *Delilah's second attempt.* This time the trial is made with new ropes (as in xv. 13).

xvi. 13, 14. *The third attempt.* The text here is incomplete, for hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web. And 14 she fastened it with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and plucked away the pin of the beam, and the web. And she said unto him, How canst thou say, 15 I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth. And it came to pass, 16

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at the end of verse 13 the last part of Samson's words has fallen out, and at the beginning of verse 14 the first part of Delilah's action. With the help of the Greek versions we may restore: 'If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web, and makest (the whole) fast with the pin, then I shall be weak and like any other man.' And Delilah made him sleep, and wove the seven locks of his head with the web, and made it fast with the pin,' &c. The 'beam' of the loom seems to have been near Samson's head as he slept. Delilah wove his hair into the web, beating it tight with the pin (or peg). When aroused, Samson sprang up and dragged up by his hair the beam and the web together. The words 'the pin of' must be left out. The Hebrew word is ungrammatical, and has evidently been put in by mistake.

xvi. 15-22. *Delilah's fourth attempt successful. The capture of Samson.* Wearied out by the importunity of the woman, Samson tells Delilah that the secret of his strength lies in his hair. If that is cut he will become like any other man. Delilah recognizes at once that this time she has learned the truth, and summons the Philistines, who are also now convinced of success and bring the money for Delilah with them. She also calls a man who shaves Samson's head when he is asleep. Samson, roused by the usual alarm, is this time seized. He is blinded, taken to Gaza, bound in chains of brass, and set to grind in prison.

15. thine heart is not with me. The heart here is the seat of knowledge rather than of affection. Compare 'all his heart' in verses 17, 18.

This time Delilah seems to realize that Samson cannot be overcome by being bound in any way, and so omits the latter part of the questions in verses 6, 10, 13. She asks this now only concerning the source of the greatness of his strength.

when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged
17 him, that his soul was vexed unto death. And he told
her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come
a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazirite unto
God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my
strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and
18 be like any other man. And when Delilah saw that he
had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the
lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for
he hath told me all his heart. Then the lords of the
Philistines came up unto her, and brought the money in
19 their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees;
and she called for a man, and shaved off the seven locks
of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength
20 went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon
thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said,
I will go out as at other times, and shake myself. But
21 he wist not that the LORD was departed from him. And
the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes;

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17. a Nazirite: see xiii. 7. There is no mention of the strength resulting from his being a Nazirite in the angel's instructions to Manoah. The connexion of the physical strength with the hair is thoroughly materialistic. Those who regard Samson as the sun consider the hair to represent the rays.

19. and (she) **shaved off.** Probably we should read 'and he (the man) shaved off,' as the man seems to be summoned for this purpose.

20. and shake myself. It seems as if we must suppose that Delilah had bound Samson in some way. The Philistines would probably wish to see that he really had lost his power of shaking himself free before they came out of their hiding-place.

the LORD was departed from him. The presence of Yahweh in Samson is conceived as indissolubly connected with the retention of his long hair.

21. The blinding of prisoners is represented on Assyrian tablets (cf. 2 Kings xxv. 7). Another form of mutilation is mentioned in i. 6. Grinding was woman's work, therefore in the eyes of an Eastern doubly contemptible for a strong man.

and they brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow 22
again after he was shaven.

And the lords of the Philistines gathered them together 23
for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw 24

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xvi. 23–31. *The death of Samson.* In verse 22 we learn that Samson's hair began to grow again after he was shaven. The Philistines evidently forgot that this meant new strength coming to him, hence the disaster. At a feast of Dagon their god the thoughts of all turned to Samson, and the people broke out into a song to their god because their enemy was in their hands. As the feast progressed and the people became merrier, they called for the production of Samson that they might jeer at him. Led by a boy, he was placed before the people between two of the pillars supporting the flat roof of the hall. But as he stood he felt his strength again, and the wild desire for vengeance rose in him. With a passionate cry to Yahweh he grasped the two main pillars and bowed himself with them. The roof with the three thousand men on it crashed upon him and those in the hall; and 'the dead whom he slew in his dying were more than those whom he slew in his life.' The Philistines apparently did not continue their hatred of him to his dead body. His brothers took him to their own place and buried him near Zorah.

23. Dagon, as we know from 1 Sam. v. 2 ff., was worshipped in Ashdod. There were two cities called Beth-dagon, i. e. 'Abode of Dagon,' in or near Philistia (Joshua xv. 41, xix. 27), and both from the Amarna letters and from a Phoenician inscription we gather that the worship of this god was widespread over the Philistine plains and in other parts of Palestine. A god Dagon was worshipped also in Babylonia. If he is thus a Semitic god it is likely that he was worshipped here when the Philistines came into the land, and that they worshipped him just as the Hebrews so often worshipped the Baals of Palestine. The supposition that his image was partly human, partly fish-like, rests on no certain evidence. The passage in 1 Sam. ii speaks of its head and hands.

a great sacrifice meant usually also a great feast, as in 1 Kings i. 9 ff.

Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. The ascription of victories and similar events to the deity was

him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath
delivered into our hand our enemy, and the destroyer of
25 our country, which hath slain many of us. And it came
to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call
for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called
for Samson out of the prison house; and he made sport
26 before them: and they set him between the pillars. And
Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand,
Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house
27 resteth, that I may lean upon them. Now the house was
full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines
were there; and there were upon the roof about
three thousand men and women, that beheld while Sam-
28 son made sport. And Samson called unto the LORD,

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common among the Semitic peoples. Mesha king of Moab is just as pious in ascribing his victory over the Israelites to Chemosh as any Israelite in ascribing to Yahweh his victory over Moab. Hundreds of inscriptions tell that the god Ashur gave victory to the Assyrians. It was thus that among them all the deity was made responsible for many an immoral or unworthy action.

24. Our god . . . many of us. These words form a sort of popular song or jingle such as Arabs are fond of at the present day. Owing to their grammatical endings five words rhyme with one another.

which hath slain many of us, *lit.* 'who has made many our slain.'

25. that he may make us sport, that he may make laughter for us. It does not necessarily mean that he had to dance or in any way play the buffoon for the people. The appearance of the once strong man, now blind and in chains, was enough to make them laugh and jeer when they were 'merry.'

26. the pillars whereupon the house resteth. The house was probably a hall forming part of the temple of Dagon. It must be thought of as flat-roofed, supported on columns, and probably open to the court where the people are feasting.

27. all the lords of the Philistines were the men who had hired Delilah to betray Samson (see verse 5).

three thousand men and women. The Greek version reads 'seven hundred.' Figures in such stories as these are more for effect than with any intention of being accurate.

and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars 29 upon which the house rested, and leaned upon them, the one with his right hand, and the other with his left. And 30 Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. Then his brethren and 31 all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. [A] And he judged Israel twenty years.

[J] And there was a man of the hill country of Ephraim, 17

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28. At the end of this verse the marginal reading is the correct translation of the Hebrew. The vengeance he is about to take will not atone for the loss of his *two* eyes, but it will at any rate be enough for one eye.

30. Let me die, *lit.* 'Let my soul die,' the soul being that living, breathing something which ceases to exist at death.

31. Zorah and Eshtaol: see xiii. 2, 25.

xvii–xviii. FIRST SUPPLEMENT TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

xvii–xviii. *The story of Micah and the migration of the Danites.* The main interest in the following narrative is clearly in the fact that at Dan, far away in the north, there was up to the time of 'the captivity of the land' (xviii. 30) a famous shrine with an image which was served by descendants of Moses. Chapter xvii, with its story of Micah and his 'house of gods' (verse 5), is only here to explain the origin of this celebrated image. Even the story of the migration of the Danites (in xviii), so interesting historically, is only secondary, the matter of main interest being that on their way north the Danites robbed Micah alike of his image and his Levite priest. Thus the general title of the two chapters might well be 'The origin of the shrine at Dan.'

The narrative is unmistakably old. The characterization of the customs, and the freedom from theological judgement, testify to its

2 whose name was Micah. And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *pieces* of silver that were taken from

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age. There is not a trace of the Deuteronomic editor's writing. This and the fact that the story would not suit the editor's purpose in compiling his book suggest that the Deuteronomic Book of Judges came to a close with the story of Samson, and that this narrative was inserted from an earlier collection of traditions before the book as a whole was put into its present position in the Canon.

It is not, however, one tradition only that is thus copied, but, as in the case of some of the judges, a blending of at least two traditions which varied in language and occasionally in their report of the same action (see Introduction and notes).

xvii. 1-6. *The origin of Micah's image.* A man named Micah, living in the hill-country of Ephraim, had stolen a sum of eleven hundred pieces of silver from his mother. She in anger had cursed the unknown thief. Terrified by the curse, Micah restored the silver, whereupon his mother took off the curse, and gave two hundred pieces of the silver for the making of an image, which was put into Micah's private temple. For the service of the image Micah employed one of his sons as priest.

1. the hill country of Ephraim. See ii. 9. No further details are given as to the place where Micah lived.

The name **Micah** is a shortened form of Micaiah, meaning 'Who is like Yah?' (cf. the name Michael, 'Who is like El?'). Micah is none the less a worshipper of Yahweh because he has images.

2-4. It is understood that Micah's mother had been robbed of eleven hundred pieces of silver and that she had laid a curse upon the thief.

eleven hundred pieces **of silver.** See xvi. 5. It is strange that exactly the same amount is mentioned here and in the Samson story.

The text from these words to the end of verse 4 is very confused. Where the English version has 'and didst also speak it,' the Hebrew has 'and didst also say,' while what she said has either been omitted or must be sought in another part of these verses. Again, verses 3 and 4 begin with exactly the same words, 'And he restored to his mother' (the English version has introduced 'when' in verse 4), so that the restoration of the silver is mentioned twice. In verse 3 the mother has dedicated the whole of the silver for an image, while in verse 4 she gives only two hundred pieces for that purpose. It seems probable that here two traditions have been blended without a real assimilation. Various attempts have been made to rearrange the text so as to give good sense. The following (in the words of the

thee, about which thou didst utter a curse, and didst also
speak it in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I
took it. And his mother said, Blessed be my son of the
LORD. And he restored the eleven hundred *pieces* of 3
silver to his mother, and his mother said, I verily de-
dicate the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my
son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now

English version) is the order adopted by Professor Moore in his commentary: 'He said unto his mother, The eleven hundred pieces of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou didst utter a curse, and didst also say in mine ears, I verily dedicate the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image, behold the silver is with me, I took it, and therefore I will restore it unto thee. And his mother said, Blessed be my son of the Lord. And he restored the (eleven hundred pieces of) silver to his mother, who took two hundred pieces of silver, and gave them to the founder,' &c. Some think that the words of the curse have been omitted purposely by the editor, and that the words 'I dedicate . . . molten image' should follow 'Blessed be my son of the Lord.' In the first alternative the curse consists in her giving the money to Yahweh and so leaving Him to punish the thief for what by her gift has become sacrilege. In the second alternative the mother dedicates the money to Yahweh in gratitude for her son's confession and the restoration.

thou didst utter a curse. This does not mean the use of bad language or the mere expression of an evil wish, but was a committing of the punishment of the thief to the deity. The power of a curse was believed to be very real, and on the restoration of the money Micah's mother takes off the curse by the blessing.

3. a graven image and a molten image. The word translated 'graven image' means an image of wood or stone, prepared by hewing or cutting. The second word certainly means 'a molten image' in many passages of the O. T. If that is the meaning here, we must suppose that it has been introduced from a second tradition, for it is clear that one image only is intended. (Notice '*it* was in the house of Micah' in verse 4, and the mention of 'the graven image' only in xviii. 30, 31.) But the word used means originally 'material that is melted, or molten work,' and as graven images were sometimes covered with metal (Deut. vii. 25), the whole phrase may simply mean an idol of wood with a silver covering.

4 therefore I will restore it unto thee. And when he re-
stored the money unto his mother, his mother took two
hundred *pieces* of silver, and gave them to the founder,
who made thereof a graven image and a molten image:
5 and it was in the house of Micah. And the man Micah
had an house of gods, and he made an ephod, and tera-
phim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his
6 priest. In those days there was no king in Israel: every
man did that which was right in his own eyes.

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4. the money, *lit.* 'the silver.'

two hundred pieces. The editor does not attempt to reconcile this action with the woman's previous statement that she had dedicated the eleven hundred pieces for this purpose.

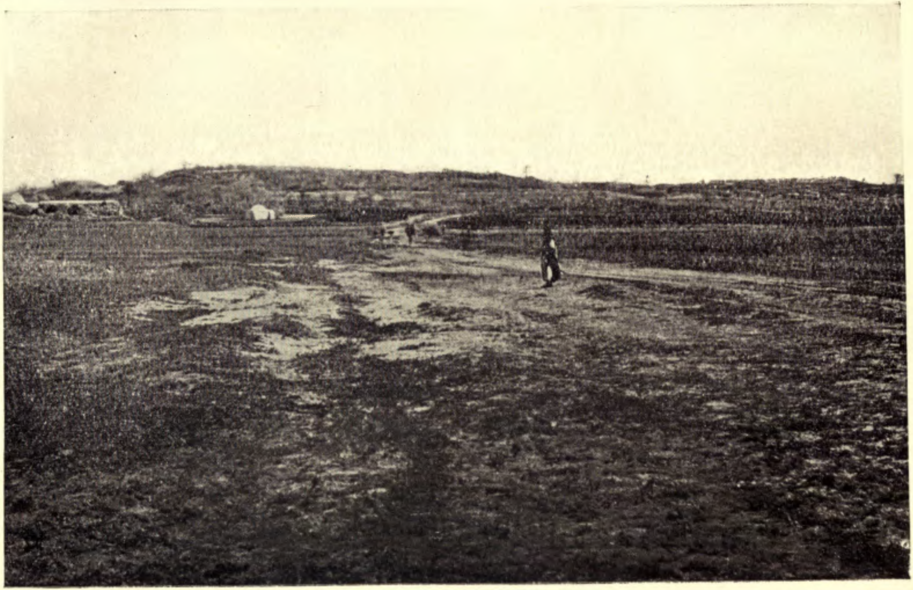
the founder, the smelter or silversmith.

5. an house of gods, i. e. a temple or shrine. The same expression is used of the temple at Shiloh in xviii. 31.

an ephod, and teraphim. For the ephod see viii. 27. It was an idol used chiefly for purposes of divination. The teraphim on the other hand were household gods. Rachel stole her father's teraphim when she left home, so as to have the benefit of their influence in her husband's household (Gen. xxxi. 19, 30, 34, 35). Michal put the teraphim into the bed to make Saul's servants believe that David was there (1 Sam. xix. 13-17); hence it would seem that they were, in part at least, in human form. According to 1 Sam. xv. 23 they were regarded as evil at an early period, but Hosea (iii. 4) mentions them without condemning them, and they existed up to exilic times (Zech. x. 2). The name by which they were called is of uncertain meaning, and is connected by some with the 'refaim' or shades of the lower world, in which case they are supposed to be connected with ancestor-worship.

consecrated, or as in margin 'filled the hand of,' a Hebrew idiom meaning 'employed,' used of priests. Originally it may have meant to fill the hand with money, that is, wages, or with the office, or as has been suggested, but with less probability, with the sacrifice (as a consecration to office). Just as Micah consecrated his son here, so the men of Kirjath-jearim consecrated Eleazar the son of Abinadab to keep the ark of Yahweh (1 Sam. vii. 1).

6. The editor in these words explains how it was that such unlawful things (from the point of view of the time when he was writing) were done among the Hebrews. Cf. xviii. 1, xix. 1, xxi. 25.



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Ashdod, from the South

And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah, 7
of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man departed out of the city, 8
out of Beth-lehem-judah, to sojourn where he could find
a place: and he came to the hill country of Ephraim to
the house of Micah, as he journeyed. And Micah said 9
unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him,
I am a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn
where I may find *a place*. And Micah said unto him, 10
Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest,

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xvii. 7–13. *Micah secures a Levite as priest for his shrine.* A young Judahite of Beth-lehem, a Levite by profession, was wandering through the country seeking a place in which to sojourn. Passing through the hill-country of Ephraim he happened to come to Micah's house. When Micah learned that he was a Levite he immediately offered him a good salary if he would become his 'father and priest.' The Levite agreed, and was installed as one of the family. Micah felt assured, now that he had a Levite as priest, that Yahweh would be good to him.

7. Beth-lehem-judah, so called to distinguish it from other Beth-lehems (a Beth-lehem in Zebulun is mentioned in Joshua xix. 15; cf. on Judges xii. 8–10), is five miles south of Jerusalem, and preserves its name in the Arabic form Beit Lahm.

who was a Levite can only mean here that he was a Levite by profession; that is, was trained specially for the work of a priest. By descent he was of Judah. So Samuel, an Ephraimite (1 Sam. i. 1), was trained for the priesthood. At a later time all priests were ascribed to a *tribe*, Levi, probably because Moses belonged to that family.

he sojourned there. To 'sojourn' is to live in a tribe or family not one's own, so the word 'there' cannot refer to Beth-lehem. It probably refers to the hill-country of Ephraim, and the sentence comes from another story than that in verse 8. (See Introduction).

8. as he journeyed: *lit.* 'to make his way,' a phrase which does not occur elsewhere, but which may mean 'to accomplish the purpose of his journey.' The word 'way' seems to be used in this sense in xviii. 5.

10. a father and a priest (as again in xviii. 19). 'A father' is used here to indicate the respect that will be paid to him. So in Gen. xlv. 8 Joseph (also a *young* man) says, 'God hath made me a father to Pharaoh.'

and I will give thee ten *pieces* of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went
11 in. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons.
12 And Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man
13 became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.

18 In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day *their* in-

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ten pieces **of silver:** about thirty shillings.

thy victuals: the same word as in vi. 4 ('sustenance').

So the Levite went in: *lit.* 'And the Levite went (or went away).' The text is faulty. The Greek version omits 'the Levite' at the beginning of the next verse and reads the two verbs together—'he went and began to dwell,' &c. (just as in English men say 'to go and do something'). The Latin omits the words altogether.

13. It is clear that while any one might be a priest in these days (cf. verse 5), it was regarded as a piece of good fortune to have a Levite, probably because such an one had been trained for the duty, and knew best how to interpret the oracles given by the deity at these shrines.

xviii. 1-6. *The visit of Danite spies to Micah's house.* The tribe of Dan had not been successful in obtaining any territory for itself, and, seeing no prospect of settling in the district allotted to it, determined to seek out a place it could seize and occupy. Five men were sent from the borders of the Philistine country, where they were leading a precarious life, to search through Palestine for a possible abode. As they passed through the hill-country of Ephraim they came to Micah's house. They had apparently known the Levite priest of Micah in earlier times, and after hearing from him why he had settled there, they asked him for an oracle concerning their journey. He assured them that the oracle was favourable to their purpose.

1. In those days there was no king in Israel. These words naturally belong to the preceding verses. There was no division into chapters and verses in early Hebrew manuscripts.

their **inheritance had not fallen unto them:** *lit.* 'there had not fallen to it (any place) as an inheritance.'

heritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel. And the children of Dan sent of their family 2
five men from their whole number, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: and they came to the hill country of Ephraim, unto the house of Micah, and lodged there. When they were by 3
the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned aside thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what doest thou in this place? and what hast thou here? And he 4
said unto them, Thus and thus hath Micah dealt with me, and he hath hired me, and I am become his priest. And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of 5
God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. And the priest said unto them, Go 6
in peace: before the LORD is your way wherein ye go.

Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and 7

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2. of their family: more correctly 'of their clan,' or as in the Greek 'clans.'

Zorah and Eshtaol. See on xiii. 25.

lodged: spent the night.

3. they knew the voice of the young man the Levite. They recognized his voice, implying either that they had known him before he came to Micah, or that they heard him performing service and recognized that he was a Levite.

5. Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God: *lit.* 'Ask, now, of God,' exactly as in i. 1, except that 'God' (Elohim) is used here, Yahweh in the earlier passage. For different ways in which Yahweh's will was sought see i. 1. That oracles might be sought at a private shrine is evident from viii. 27.

6. before the LORD is your way: i. e. your journey is under His observation and favour.

xviii. 7–10. *The discovery of Laish by the spies, and their report.* After a journey of over a hundred miles from their starting-place the five Danites found a city called Laish on the south side of Mount Hermon. The people of the city were prosperous, peaceful, and, having no allies, were defenceless. This seemed to

saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt in security, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure: for there was none in the land, possessing authority, that might put *them* to shame in any thing, and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no
8 dealings with any man. And they came unto their

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satisfy their requirements, so they returned to their tribe and exhorted them to go up and possess that region.

7. Laish: called 'Leshem' in Joshua xix. 47, is mentioned by this name only in these passages, although, to be consistent, 'Laish' should be substituted for 'Dan' in Gen. xiv. 14. Under its new name of 'Dan' (verse 29) it is often mentioned. The phrase 'from Dan to Beer-sheba' is used several times to indicate the northern and southern limits of Hebrew possessions. It is generally identified with the modern Tell-el-Kādī ('hill of the judge'). 'Dan' in Hebrew means 'judge'; 'Ḳādī' is the Arabic for the same. This hill or mound is 505 feet above sea-level, and from it flow two streams which form the largest source of the Jordan. It lies rather under thirty miles from Tyre on the west, and more than forty from Damascus on the north-east. Of late Dr. G. A. Smith has sought to identify Dan with the modern Bāniās (less than an hour's journey from Tell-el-Ḳādī) on the ground of its superior strength and position. Both identifications are found in early Greek writers.

after the manner of the Zidonians: i. e. like the Phoenicians (see x. 6). The mention of the Zidonians here and later in this verse (cf. also on v. 17) suggests that Laish was a settlement of Phoenicians. These were not a warlike but generally a commercial people. Here, however, they must have settled down to an agricultural life.

there was none in the land, possessing authority, that might put them **to shame in any thing.** This literal translation is unintelligible, and the Hebrew text seems to be quite corrupt. The Greek and other versions give no help. Three of the Hebrew words are the same as in the last clause of verse 10, and it is possible that the whole clause there was originally here also, and that the words translated 'possessing authority' (in the Greek 'wealth') are a note.

were far from the Zidonians. See above under 'Laish.'

and had no dealings with any man. The word translated 'any man' is *Adam*. But some Greek MSS. read *Aram* (the *d* and *r* are very much alike in Hebrew). As the Zidonians were their neighbours on one side, and the people of Aram (Damascus, &c.) on the other, it is possible that this was the original text.

brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said
unto them, What *say* ye? And they said, Arise, and let 9
us go up against them: for we have seen the land, and,
behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful
to go and to enter in to possess the land. When ye go, 10
ye shall come unto a people secure, and the land is
large: for God hath given it into your hand; a place
where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth.

And there set forth from thence of the family of the 11
Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred
men girt with weapons of war. And they went up, and 12
encamped in Kiriath-jearim, in Judah: wherefore they

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8. What say **ye?** The Hebrew has only 'What you?' Among the many suggestions made to give sense, the simplest is to suppose that one letter has fallen out of the text, or perhaps two letters. In the former case we could read, 'What have you seen?' in the latter, 'What have you found?'

9. let us go up against them. Apparently the spies had been sent to examine Laish or that district specially, so that there is no need to explain where they have been.

xviii. 11–27^a. *The migration of Danites and theft of Micah's image.* Six hundred Danite men with their families and possessions set out for Laish. After camping at Kiriath-jearim they came to the hill-country of Ephraim, where the five spies suggested the appropriation of Micah's celebrated image. The image was accordingly seized and the Levite persuaded to accompany it and become priest to the Danites. Micah, discovering his loss, pursued, but was compelled to turn back because 'they were too strong for him.' In this part of the story the accumulation of images (four names in verses 14, 17, 18, three in verse 20) seems to point to the blending of different traditions, and this indication is strengthened by the account of the theft (see below and Introduction).

12. Kiriath-jearim ('Forests-city'). The site of this city has been identified, from the fifth century on, with the modern Kuriet 'Enab, well known to those who have travelled from Jaffa to Jerusalem by road as Abū Ghōsh. Lately, however, it has been placed at Khurbet 'Erma, about four miles east of Beth-shemesh. The ark was preserved here for some time later (1 Sam. vii. 1 ff.).

called that place Mahaneh-dan, unto this day: behold, it
13 is behind Kiriath-jearim. And they passed thence unto
the hill country of Ephraim, and came unto the house
14 of Micah. Then answered the five men that went to
spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their
brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an
ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten
image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.
15 And they turned aside thither, and came to the house of
the young man the Levite, even unto the house of
16 Micah, and asked him of his welfare. And the six
hundred men girt with their weapons of war, who were
of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate.
17 And the five men that went to spy out the land went up,
and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the
ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and
the priest stood by the entering of the gate with the six
18 hundred men girt with weapons of war. And when
these went into Micah's house, and fetched the graven

Mahaneh-dan: i. e. 'Camp of Dan,' lay, according to xiii. 25, between Zorah and Eshtaol. According to this verse it lay 'behind,' i. e. west of Kiriath-jearim. The camping-ground was thus probably in the Wādi Surār.

14. now therefore consider what ye have to do: *lit.* 'and now know what you will do,' as in 1 Sam. xxv. 17, with the addition of 'know and.'

15. and asked him of his welfare: and greeted him with the usual word 'Peace.'

16, 17. by the entering of the gate: by the opening of the gate of the town, as in ix. 35. Here the Levite stood talking with them, while the five spies went to the house, which they already knew, and stole the images.

The ephod may be the name given in another tradition to the graven and molten image. Only this one image is mentioned in verses 30, 31. If the teraphim were household gods (see on xvii. 5) it was a wanton deed to carry them off, for they could be of no use to the Danites.

18. These must refer to the five men. This verse seems to be

image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten
image, the priest said unto them, What do ye? And 19
they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand
upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father
and a priest: is it better for thee to be priest unto the
house of one man, or to be priest unto a tribe and a
family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad, and he 20
took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image,
and went in the midst of the people. So they turned 21
and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and
the goods before them. When they were a good way 22
from the house of Micah, the men that were in the
houses near to Micah's house were gathered together,
and overtook the children of Dan. And they cried unto 23
the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and
said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with
such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my 24
gods which I made, and the priest, and are gone away,
and what have I more? and how then say ye unto me,
What aileth thee? And the children of Dan said unto 25
him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry
fellows fall upon you, and thou lose thy life, with the
lives of thy household. And the children of Dan went 26
their way: and when Micah saw that they were too
strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.
And they took that which Micah had made, and the 27

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taken from a tradition in which the Levite is represented as being in or near the house, not at the city gate (cf. the last clause of verse 20).

20. The Greek version adds the molten image in this verse also.

21. The right order for defending the rear from attack.

22. The theft of the images was a loss to the neighbourhood, and not to Micah alone.

25. angry fellows: men of nasty temper.

xviii. 27-31. *The capture of Laish, founding of Dan, and estab-*

priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people
quiet and secure, and smote them with the edge of the
28 sword; and they burnt the city with fire. And there
was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and
they had no dealings with any man; and it was in the
valley that lieth by Beth-rehob. And they built the city,
29 and dwelt therein. And they called the name of the
city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was
born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was
30 Laish at the first. And the children of Dan set up for
themselves the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of
Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons were priests
to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity
31 of the land. So they set them up Micah's graven image
which he made, all the time that the house of God was
in Shiloh.

---

lishment of the image. On arriving in the north the Danites easily captured Laish, which they burned. On its site they built a city which they called Dan, and in it set up the image they had stolen. Their shrine was served by priests of Mosaic descent until 'the captivity of the land,' and the image remained there all the time the 'house of God was in Shiloh.'

28. it was in the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob: more literally, 'which belongs to Beth-rehob.' This place is unknown, but is mentioned as inhabited by Syrians in 2 Sam. x. 6, and is probably the Rehob of Num. xiii. 21.

29. who was born unto Israel. See Gen. xxx. 5, 6.

30. the son of Gershom, the son of Moses. Gershom is mentioned as a son of Moses in Exod. ii. 22, xviii. 3. At a later time the claim of Dan to possess a priesthood of Mosaic descent was an offence, and the letter *n* was introduced into the Hebrew name Moses, thus changing it to Manasseh. This letter was not, however, incorporated into the text, but was put above the line, and is so printed in the Hebrew text.

until the day of the captivity of the land: i. e. probably the captivity of the people in the north by Tiglath-pileser in 734-3 (2 Kings xv. 29).

31. all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh. The 'house of Yahweh' in Shiloh is mentioned in 1 Sam i. 24, cf.

And it came to pass in those days, when there was no 19
king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning
on the farther side of the hill country of Ephraim, who
took to him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah. And 2

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iii. 15. The ark was lost in the Philistine wars (1 Sam. iv. 11), and the priests of Eli's house are at Nob in 1 Sam. xxi. 1–9; but nothing is said of the destruction of the temple there until it is mentioned in Jer. vii. 12, 14, xxvi. 9, without any reference to the time when it was destroyed.

Shiloh, now Seilūn, on a large round hill nine and a half miles north-north-east of Beth-el.

xix–xxi. SECOND SUPPLEMENT TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

The outrage at Gibeah and war against Benjamin. A Levite stays for a night in a Benjamite city with his concubine. The latter is so evilly treated by some worthless men of the city that she is found dead in the morning. The Levite divides her body into twelve parts and sends one to each of the Hebrew tribes as a call to vengeance. The Hebrews gather at Mizpah, and having heard the Levite's story call upon the Benjamites to give up the culprits. This they refuse to do and war is declared. After three days' fighting and severe losses the tribesmen annihilate the Benjamites, all save six hundred men. Anxious, however, that a tribe of Israel should not perish, they wish to secure wives for these six hundred warriors. They cannot give their own daughters, for they have sworn not to do so, therefore they attack and destroy all the people of Jabesh-gilead except the virgins, of whom they secure four hundred for the men of Benjamin. These not being sufficient, the Benjamites are told to lie in wait and seize the maidens who come out to dance during a 'feast of Yahweh' at Shiloh. This they also do.

xix. 1–10^{a}. *The Levite's visit to Beth-lehem.* A certain Levite sojourning in the hill-country of Ephraim had a concubine who quarrelled with him, left him, and returned to her father's house in Beth-lehem of Judah. After four months the Levite went down to Beth-lehem to try and persuade her to return with him. Reconciled with the woman, he remained in her father's house for five days, and then the two started on their return home.

1. sojourning, see on xvii. 7.

on the farther side of: in the extreme parts of, i. e. probably on the north side.

the hill country of Ephraim, as in ch. 17.

Beth-lehem-Judah is brought into connexion with a Levite as in xvii. 7.

his concubine played the harlot against him, and went
away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-
3 judah, and was there the space of four months. And
her husband arose, and went after her, to speak kindly
unto her, to bring her again, having his servant with him,
and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her
father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw
4 him, he rejoiced to meet him. And his father in law,
the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with
him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged
5 there. And it came to pass on the fourth day, that they
arose early in the morning, and he rose up to depart:
and the damsel's father said unto his son in law, Comfort
thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward ye shall
6 go your way. So they sat down, and did eat and drink,
both of them together: and the damsel's father said unto
the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night,
7 and let thine heart be merry. And the man rose up to
depart; but his father in law urged him, and he lodged
8 there again. And he arose early in the morning on the
fifth day to depart; and the damsel's father said, Comfort
thine heart, I pray thee, and tarry ye until the day

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2. played the harlot against him. The text is not certain, and one is tempted to adopt the reading of some Greek MSS. 'was angry (or 'quarrelled') with him.'

3. to bring her again is supported by the Greek and other versions, and is better than the reading and explanation in the margin.

rejoiced to meet him: rather 'met him rejoicing,' or 'gladly.'

5. Compare the last part of this verse with Gen. xviii. 5–8. A 'morsel of bread' with Abraham meant three measures of fine meal, a calf 'tender and good,' with butter and milk. Probably the 'morsel' means little less here.

6. let thine heart be merry. The same expression is used of the effects of feasting in xvi. 25.

8. tarry ye until the day declineth: and in verse 9 the declin-

declineth; and they did eat, both of them. And when 9
the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and
his servant, his father in law, the damsel's father, said
unto him, Behold, now the day draweth toward evening,
I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to
an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and
to-morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest
go home. But the man would not tarry that night, but 10
he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus
(the same is Jerusalem): and there were with him a
couple of asses saddled; his concubine also was with
him. When they were by Jebus, the day was far spent; 11
and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee,
and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites, and
lodge in it. And his master said unto him, We will not 12
turn aside into the city of a stranger, that is not of the

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ing day is alleged as a reason for staying for the night. A thoroughly Oriental scene.

xix. 10–21. *The journey to Gibeah and entertainment there.* The Levite, his concubine, and his servant had only travelled a few miles when night began to fall and the servant suggested that they should stay in Jerusalem. His master refused on the ground that it was entirely a foreign city, but proposed to halt in Gibeah or Ramah. As the sun set when they were near Gibeah they entered this city and awaited an invitation to hospitality. But the Benjamites who lived in Gibeah were inhospitable, and the visitors remained in the street, until an old man of the hill-country of Ephraim, who 'sojourned' (cf. on xvii. 7) there, saw them as he returned from his work and offered them a lodging for the night.

10. Jebus. This name occurs again in 1 Chron. xi. 4, 5; Joshua xv. 8, xviii. 16, 21, of Jerusalem; and the Jebusites are often spoken of as inhabiting Jerusalem (see i. 21). But the name of the city was Urusalim as early as 1400 B.C., as we find this name in the Amarna letters.

The Levite and his company would arrive at the hill of Jerusalem within two hours of leaving Beth-lehem.

12. that is not of the children of Israel. The Hebrew is unusual and ambiguous. The marginal rendering is possible, but

children of Israel; but we will pass over to Gibeah.
13 And he said unto his servant, Come and let us draw near
to one of these places; and we will lodge in Gibeah, or
14 in Ramah. So they passed on and went their way; and
the sun went down upon them near to Gibeah, which
15 belongeth to Benjamin. And they turned aside thither,
to go in to lodge in Gibeah: and he went in, and sat
him down in the street of the city: for there was no man
16 that took them into his house to lodge. And, behold,
there came an old man from his work out of the field at
even; now the man was of the hill country of Ephraim,
and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place
17 were Benjamites. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw
the wayfaring man in the street of the city; and the old
man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou?

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that in the text more probable; 'that' refers to 'city.' The suggestion is that in a foreign city they could not expect the same kindly welcome as in a place inhabited by brother Israelites. Thus the actual treatment they receive in Gibeah (verses 15^{b}, 22ff.) is made to appear at its worst.

Gibeah means simply 'a hill,' and several cities bear the name. This one, Gibeah of Benjamin, is identified with Tell el-Fūl, a hill 2,754 feet above sea-level, about four miles north of Jerusalem, and a little to the east of the main road.

13. Ramah (a 'height'), now er-Rām, another hill, 2,600 feet above sea-level, five miles north of Jerusalem, also near the main road.

15. The sun had gone down, and darkness set in—for there is little or no twilight in Palestine—as they were near Gibeah, so the Levite turned off the main road and entered this city. Inns were unknown, and visitors were thrown upon the hospitality of the inhabitants, so the man sat down in the square (or broad place), for there was not a man who took them to his home to spend the night.

16. Hospitality was offered at last, but not by a Benjamite. An old man of Ephraim, who had left his own people and was 'sojourning' among the Benjamites, passed through the square as he came back from his work in the fields, saw the strangers, questioned them, and (verse 21) took them home with him.

17. Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? Exactly

And he said unto him, We are passing from Beth-lehem- 18
judah unto the farther side of the hill country of Ephraim;
from thence am I, and I went to Beth-lehem-judah: and
I am *now* going to the house of the LORD; and there is
no man that taketh me into his house. Yet there is 19
both straw and provender for our asses; and there is
bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and
for the young man which is with thy servants: there is
no want of any thing. And the old man said, Peace be 20
unto thee; howsoever let all thy wants lie upon me;
only lodge not in the street. So he brought him into 21
his house, and gave the asses fodder: and they washed
their feet, and did eat and drink.

As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the 22
men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house

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the same questions are asked to-day in Palestine as soon as a stranger appears.

11. I am now **going to the house of the LORD.** According to xx. 18 the Israelites went up to Beth-el to ask counsel of God, and in xx. 27 a note says that the ark was there at that time. In 1 Sam. iii. 3 the ark, and in i. 7 the 'house of Yahweh,' are in Shiloh. One of these places must be intended if the text is correct. But the Greek version reads (as in R. V. margin) 'to my house,' which may be the original, the letter *y* (meaning 'my') at the end of the word 'my house' (in Hebrew 'house-my') having been taken later as the initial of the word 'Yahweh,' which was then written in full and gave our present Hebrew text.

XXX. 22-28. *Death of the concubine at the hands of the Benjamites.* The arrival of the strangers had not passed without notice, although no hospitality had been offered. Certain rough men of the city came to the house where they were being entertained and demanded that the man should be brought out, that they might use him for immoral purposes. To save himself the Levite seized his concubine and gave her over to them, and 'they abused her all the night.' In the morning the Levite found her dead on the threshold. Putting the corpse on his ass he went to his place.

22. were making their hearts merry. See verse 6.

sons of Belial, or, translating the last word, 'of worthlessness'; used of the sons of Eli in 1 Sam. ii. 12, and so with various shades of

round about, beating at the door; and they spake to the
master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the
man that came into thine house, that we may know him.
23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto
them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, I pray you,
do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into
24 mine house, do not this folly. [A] Behold, here is my
daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will
bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them
what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not
25 any such folly. [J] But the men would not hearken to
him: so the man laid hold on his concubine, and
brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and
abused her all the night until the morning: and when
26 the day began to spring, they let her go. Then came
the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at
the door of the man's house where her lord was, till it
27 was light. And her lord rose up in the morning, and
opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his
way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen
down at the door of the house, with her hands upon the

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meaning in 1 Sam. x. 27, xxv. 17, xxx. 22; 2 Sam. xvi. 7, &c. In most of these passages 'scoundrel' is perhaps the best English equivalent. A drunken woman might be called a 'daughter of Belial' (1 Sam. i. 16). The unnatural lust in the last clause of the verse has a parallel in Gen. xix. 5.

24. This verse has apparently been introduced to make the story more like that in Gen. xix, where verse 8 has been the pattern for this. Verse 25 follows verse 23 naturally.

25. The horror of the story is increased to the modern reader by the brutality of the Levite in driving out the woman to save himself.

when the day began to spring, i. e. when the first trace of light came into the sky.

26. in the dawning of the day: as the light grew clear, and morning broke.

her lord. So Sarah speaks of Abraham (Gen. xviii. 12).

threshold. And he said unto her, Up, and let us be 28
going; but none answered: then he took her up upon
the ass; and the man rose up, and gat him unto his
place. And when he was come into his house, he took 29
a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her,
limb by limb, into twelve pieces, and sent her through-
out all the borders of Israel. And it was so, that all 30
that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen
from the day that the children of Israel came up out of
the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take
counsel, and speak.

[A] Then all the children of Israel went out, and the **20**

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xix. 29–30. *The Levite's appeal to the tribes of Israel.*

29. divided her. The word here is the one used for cutting up an animal for sacrifice (Lev. i. 6, 12, &c.).

twelve pieces: apparently the number of parts into which the body came when divided according to the bones.

The sending of the pieces is parallel to Saul's action in 1 Sam. xi. 7.

30. Some MSS. of the Greek version read 'And he charged the men whom he sent, saying, Say these words to every man of Israel, Has such a thing as this happened from the day,' &c. The last words of the verse, 'consider of it, take counsel, and speak,' are much more intelligible if spoken by the Levite's messengers to those to whom they came.

Chapters xx, xxi differ entirely in language, method of presentation, and point of view from what precedes. In ch. xix the story is old with the addition of a few late notes. In these chapters the whole is late, and is modelled on the laws and narratives in Deuteronomy and the Priestly law. Wrapped up in it is doubtless an older and simpler story, the substance of which can be distinguished, although it is difficult to select the exact passages which may have been in the original narrative. In the class of literature, called Midrash, to which this belongs, historic accuracy is of little or no importance. What is aimed at is vividness of presentation and especially correctness of procedure according to the law (of the later time). For further details see Introduction, p. 17.

xx. 1–7. *The Israelites assemble at Mizpah and listen to the Levite's story.* All the Israelites from the extreme north to the furthest south of Palestine, and those who live east of the Jordan,

congregation was assembled as one man, from Dan even
to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD
2 at Mizpah. And the chiefs of all the people, even of all
the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly
of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen
3 that drew sword. (Now the children of Benjamin heard

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gather 'as one man' at Mizpah, and hear the story of the Levite's wrongs.

1. went out—for war (see ii. 15, &c.).

the congregation was assembled. The 'congregation' is the technical term in post-exilic writings for the people of Israel. The three stages of development of the people in history are (1) The Hebrews, i.e. tribes; (2) Israel, a nation; (3) the Congregation, a religious body. The term 'Congregation' is then used by the Priestly writer of the Exile and later to denote the Hebrews even of the Mosaic time (Lev. viii. 4; Num. xvi. 41, &c.). The verb 'was assembled' is also characteristic of the priestly writing (as in the passages referred to).

from Dan even to Beer-sheba: an expression that occurs seven times, but only between this passage and 1 Kings iv. 25. For Dan see xviii. 7. **Beer-sheba** still retains its old name, but in Arabic 'Bīr es-Sebā',' the meaning being 'Well of seven' or 'Well of oath.' It is twenty-eight miles south-west of Hebron, and just on the border of the Negeb. Traditions connected it with Abraham (Gen. xxi. 22 ff., E) and with Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 26 ff., J), and it was a sanctuary up to the time of Amos (Amos v. 5, viii. 14).

the land of Gilead: as in v. 17 and xi, used of the Hebrews east of the Jordan.

The words **unto the LORD** seem to indicate the existence of a shrine at Mizpah (cf. 1 Sam. vii. 5 ff., x. 17 ff.). Jerome says the ark rested there once.

Mizpah: on the mountain now called Neby Samwīl, 2,935 feet above sea-level, four and a half miles north-west of Jerusalem, and two from Gibeah (xix. 12).

2. the chiefs. The same word (*lit.* 'corners') is used in 1 Sam. xiv. 38; Isa. xix. 13, &c.

the assembly of the people of God again marks the latest stage of Hebrew history (see on verse 1).

four hundred thousand. In the song of Deborah forty thousand expressed the number of the armies of Israel.

3. How the Benjamites should *not* hear would be difficult to understand, for Mizpah is in the middle of their land, and only about two miles from Gibeah.

that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpah.)
And the children of Israel said, Tell us, how was this
wickedness brought to pass? And the Levite, the hus- 4
band of the woman that was murdered, answered and
said, I came into Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I
and my concubine, to lodge. And the men of Gibeah 5
rose against me, and beset the house round about upon
me by night; me they thought to have slain, and my
concubine they forced, and she is dead. And I took my 6
concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout
all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have
committed lewdness and folly in Israel. Behold, ye 7
children of Israel, all of you, give here your advice and
counsel. And all the people arose as one man, saying, 8
We will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any
of us turn unto his house. But now this is the thing 9
which we will do to Gibeah; *we will go up* against it by
lot; and we will take ten men of an hundred throughout 10
all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand,
and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for
the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah
of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have
wrought in Israel. So all the men of Israel were gather- 11
ed against the city, knit together as one man.

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7. *Lit.* 'Behold, all of you, O children of Israel, give a word and counsel here.'

xx. 8–11. *The Israelites settle on a plan of action.* The assembly determines that no one shall return home, but that a tenth of the men shall be appointed to procure food, and that they will attack Gibeah and punish it for its crime.

9. we will go up. These words are supplied from the Greek version. The verb has dropped out of the Hebrew text.

by lot. See verse 18.

10. when they come is generally supposed to mean, when the foragers return, but it is so awkward in the original that it is better omitted altogether.

12 And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe
of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness is this that is
13 come to pass among you? Now therefore deliver up the
men, the sons of Belial, which are in Gibeah, that we
may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel.
But Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their
14 brethren the children of Israel. And the children of
Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities
unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of
15 Israel. And the children of Benjamin were numbered
on that day out of the cities twenty and six thousand
men that drew sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah,
which were numbered seven hundred chosen men.
16 Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen
men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair-
breadth, and not miss.

XX. 12-16. *Israel's demand. Benjamin's refusal and preparation for war.* The Israelites, before attacking Gibeah, send messengers through 'all the tribes of Benjamin' demanding the surrender of the criminals of Gibeah. The Benjamites refuse, and gather for battle at Gibeah. Twenty-six thousand men from other cities of Benjamin and seven hundred from Gibeah are counted in their host.

12. tribe of Benjamin. If the Hebrew text is correct in giving the plural 'tribes' (see R.V. marg.), here and in 1 Sam. ix. 21, the word is used in the most unusual sense of a subdivision of a tribe. (Cf. Num. iv. 18.)

and put away evil from Israel. The phrase 'put away' (or 'exterminate') evil from Israel occurs several times in Deuteronomy, and nowhere else.

15. The number 26,000 does not agree with the figures in later verses. The Greek 25,000 seems to be an attempt to bring them more into accord.

16. The words 'seven hundred chosen men' seem to be repeated by mistake from the preceding verse. They do not appear in the Greek version, which joins the last word of verse 15 to this verse, and translates 'Chosen men of all the people were ambidextrous, all these could sling, &c.' The Hebrew, however, does not mean 'ambidextrous,' but 'maimed in the right hand' (see iii. 15). For the Benjamites' skill in slinging and archery cf. 1 Chron. xii. 2.

And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were num- 17
bered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all
these were men of war. And the children of Israel arose, 18
and went up to Beth-el, and asked counsel of God; and
they said, Who shall go up for us first to battle against
the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah
shall go up first. And the children of Israel rose up in 19
the morning, and encamped against Gibeah. And the 20
men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and
the men of Israel set the battle in array against them at
Gibeah. And the children of Benjamin came forth out 21
of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the
Israelites on that day twenty and two thousand men.
And the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves, 22
and set the battle again in array in the place where they
set themselves in array the first day. (And the children 23
of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until even;
and they asked of the LORD, saying, Shall I again draw
nigh to battle against the children of Benjamin my
brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.)

XX. 17–28. *The preparations of the Israelites and their defeats.* The Israelite army, numbering four hundred thousand men, go up to Beth-el and cast lots to know who should first go up against Gibeah. Judah is chosen (but nothing more is said of it). All the Israelites then encamp before Gibeah, but the Benjamites make a sally and slay twenty-two thousand Israelites. On the second day they sally forth again and slay eighteen thousand. The Israelites go up to Beth-el and sacrifice to Yahweh and seek an oracle from Him.

18. Beth-el. See i. 22. According to this verse the 400,000 men marched away from Mizpah (half an hour's distance from Gibeah) or from Gibeah itself (see verse 11) to Beth-el, some hours distant to the north, only in verse 19 to return. All this marching would be in the enemy's own country.

and asked counsel, &c.: clearly copied from i. 1, 2. Nothing more is said of Judah.

21. down to the ground: i.e. leaving them slain on the ground.

23. This verse should come before verse 22 to make sense.

24 And the children of Israel came near against the
25 children of Benjamin the second day. And Benjamin
went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day,
and destroyed down to the ground of the children of
Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the
26 sword. Then all the children of Israel, and all the
people, went up, and came unto Beth-el, and wept, and
sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even;
and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings
27 before the LORD. And the children of Israel asked of
the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there
28 in those days, and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son
of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I
yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin
my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said,
Go up; for to-morrow I will deliver him into thine hand.
29 And Israel set liers in wait against Gibeah round about.

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26. burnt offerings and peace offerings. (Cf. xxi. 4.) The former were sacrifices in which the whole offering was burned on the altar. In the latter a part was offered to Yahweh, a part (sometimes at any rate) taken by the priest (1 Sam. ii. 13 f.), while the rest was eaten in a common meal or feast by the worshippers (cf. ix. 27). The exact meaning of the term 'peace-offering' is uncertain.

27, 28. the ark of the covenant of God. This is the only place in Judges where the ark is mentioned (see ii. 1–5). This note is added to explain why the Israelites went to Beth-el, as it might otherwise have been supposed that the ark had been at Shiloh from the days of Joshua (cf. Joshua xviii. 8–10) to the time of Samuel. The expression 'ark of the covenant of God' (or 'Yahweh') is a late one.

Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. (Exod. vi. 25; Num. xxv. 7, 11, &c.) The whole incident is placed, by the mention of this name, in the lifetime of the first generation of the Hebrews in Palestine.

xx. 29–36ᵃ. *First account of the battle on the third day.* On the third day the Israelites took up their position as before, and when the Benjamites sallied out again they feigned to flee, thus drawing

And the children of Israel went up against the children 30
of Benjamin on the third day, and set themselves in
array against Gibeah, as at other times. And the children 31
of Benjamin went out against the people, and were
drawn away from the city; and they began to smite and
kill of the people, as at other times, in the high ways, of
which one goeth up to Beth-el, and the other to Gibeah,
in the field, about thirty men of Israel. And the children 32
of Benjamin said, They are smitten down before us, as
at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee,
and draw them away from the city unto the high ways.
And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and 33
set themselves in array at Baal-tamar: and the liers in
wait of Israel brake forth out of their place, even out of
Maareh-geba. And there came over against Gibeah ten 34
thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle
was sore: but they knew not that evil was close upon
them. And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: 35

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the enemy away from the city. At a certain spot ten thousand Israelites broke out of ambush, and the Benjamites were routed with a loss of twenty-five thousand one hundred men.

31. and were drawn away from the city: a parenthesis in the Hebrew. (Joshua viii. 16.) The text is not in order, and judging by verse 39 should probably be restored thus: 'they were drawn away from the city into the highways, of which one goes up to Beth-el and the other to Gibeon—and they began to slay in the open country as at other times some of the people, about thirty men of Israel.'

Gibeah. As the roads go *from* Gibeah, this is probably a mistake for Gibeon, to which there is a highway near.

33. The site of **Baal-tamar** ('Palm-tree Baal') is unknown.

out of Maareh-geba. Most of the Greek MSS. and the Latin version read 'from the west of Gibeah.' This means a change of one letter in the first word in Hebrew. As Geba is put for Gibeah in verse 19, so it is probably here.

34. While the ten thousand men were attacking Gibeah the Benjamites were fighting with the main body of the Israelites, and did not realize the disaster that had come upon them.

35, 36^{a}. The words at the beginning of verse 36 are absurd

and the children of Israel destroyed of Benjamin that
day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all
these drew the sword.

36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were
smitten: for the men of Israel gave place to Benjamin,
because they trusted unto the liers in wait which they
37 had set against Gibeah. And the liers in wait hasted,
and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liers in wait drew
themselves along, and smote all the city with the edge of
38 the sword. Now the appointed sign between the men of
Israel and the liers in wait was, that they should make
39 a great cloud of smoke rise up out of the city. And the
men of Israel turned in the battle, and Benjamin began
to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty
persons: for they said, Surely they are smitten down

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coming after the annihilation of the Benjamites in verse 35. They should come evidently after verse 34, and are probably a fragment of that part of the first account which corresponded to verses 40, 41 in the second.

xx. 36^b–48. *Second account of the battle on the third day.* The main body of the Israelites gave way before the attack of the Benjamites when they made their usual sally. The men who had been in ambush then rushed out, attacked Gibeah, took it, and set it on fire (as had been arranged). The Benjamites, who had killed about thirty Israelites in their pursuit, now turned round, saw the smoke of the burning Gibeah, realized their disaster, and fled along the road to the wilderness. In the rout eighteen thousand Benjamites were slain, then five thousand more, then another two thousand. Six hundred men only escaped to the rock of Rimmon, where they abode for four months. Gibeah and other Benjamite cities were burned, and all property destroyed.

36. for the men of Israel. In Hebrew 'and the men of Israel.'

37. drew themselves along: simply 'drew,' i.e. 'moved forward,' as in iv. 6.

39. And the men of Israel turned in the battle. As this is described in its proper place in verse 41 it is probable that these words should be joined to the previous verse here and read as part of the plan agreed on, 'and that the men of Israel should turn,' &c.

For the rest of the verse cf. verse 31.

before us, as in the first battle. But when the cloud 40
began to arise up out of the city in a pillar of smoke, the
Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the whole
of the city went up *in smoke* to heaven. And the men of 41
Israel turned, and the men of Benjamin were amazed:
for they saw that evil was come upon them. Therefore 42
they turned their backs before the men of Israel unto the
way of the wilderness; but the battle followed hard after
them; and they which came out of the cities destroyed
them in the midst thereof. They inclosed the Ben- 43
jamites round about, *and* chased them, *and* trode them
down at *their* resting place, as far as over against Gibeah
toward the sunrising. And there fell of Benjamin 44
eighteen thousand men; all these *were* men of valour.
And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the 45
rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the high

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40. looked behind them: simply 'turned round.'

the whole. The word in Hebrew is that used for an offering which was wholly burned on the altar (cf. Deut. xiii. 16 marg.).

in smoke. These words are not in the text, and are quite unnecessary.

to heaven: heavenwards.

42. the way of the wilderness: i. e. towards the eastern part of Benjamin's territory. See verses 45, 47. The text in the latter part of the verse is much better than the marginal interpretation. The word 'cities' is difficult to explain, as the cities of this district would naturally be Benjamite. The Latin version interprets 'they which came out of the cities' as 'they who had burned the city' (i. e. Gibeah).

43. This verse is full of difficulties. The first sentence, 'They surrounded Benjamin,' is rendered by the Greek version 'they cut Benjamin to pieces' (by a change of one letter in Hebrew). The second verb never occurs in this form anywhere else in Hebrew. The word translated 'at their resting-place' in the text, 'at Menuhah' in the marg., is rendered 'from Nuhah' in the Greek (cf. 'Nohah' of Benjamin in 1 Chron. viii. 2). The meaning of the verb before it is uncertain.

toward the sunrising: i. e. in the East.

45. Rimmon: now Rammōn, about three miles east of Beth-el.

ways five thousand men; and followed hard after them
46 unto Gidom, and smote of them two thousand men. So
that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and
five thousand men that drew the sword; all these *were*
47 men of valour. But six hundred men turned and fled
toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon, and
48 abode in the rock of Rimmon four months. And the
men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, both
the entire city, and the cattle, and all that they found:
moreover all the cities which they found they set on fire.

21 Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah, saying,
There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Ben-
2 jamin to wife. And the people came to Beth-el, and sat

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48. the entire city: better as in marg. 'the inhabited city,' *lit.* 'the city of men.'

and the cattle: *lit.* 'up to cattle,' i. e. including everything between man and cattle, such as women and children.

all that they found: every existing thing.

xxi. 1–14. *Wives are secured for four hundred Benjamite survivors by the destruction of Jabesh-gilead.* The Israelites now bewailed the fact that, by their action, one of the tribes of Israel was about to perish entirely. Only 600 Benjamite men remained. They themselves had sworn they would not give their daughters to Benjamites. How could they provide wives for these men and thus save the tribe? None of the people of Jabesh-gilead had come up to the meeting at Mizpah (xx), so it was now determined to send twelve thousand men to destroy every living being in that city except unmarried maidens. This was done. Four hundred virgins were saved alive and handed over to the Benjamites, who were now allowed to come from Rimmon to their old land.

1. the men of Israel had sworn: (cf. verses 7, 18). The power of an oath was such that Jephthah sacrificed his only daughter rather than break it (xi), and Micah was terrified by his mother's curse into restoring the money he had stolen (xvii. 2). Here it is thought better to destroy a whole city 'with the women and the little ones' rather than break the oath at Mizpah. And when this was not enough it was evaded by trickery, although the letter of it was kept (verse 22).

2–4. came to Beth-el, &c., as in xx. 18, 26.

there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and
wept sore. And they said, O LORD, the God of Israel, 3
why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be
to-day one tribe lacking in Israel? And it came to pass 4
on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there
an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.
And the children of Israel said, Who is there among all 5
the tribes of Israel that came not up in the assembly
unto the LORD? For they had made a great oath concerning
him that came not up unto the LORD to Mizpah,
saying, He shall surely be put to death. And the chil- 6
dren of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother,
and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day.
How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing 7
we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them of
our daughters to wives? And they said, What one is there 8
of the tribes of Israel that came not up unto the LORD to
Mizpah? And, behold, there came none to the camp
from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly. For when the 9
people were numbered, behold, there were none of the
inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there. And the congregation 10
sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and
commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants
of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the
women and the little ones. And this is the thing that 11
ye shall do; ye shall utterly destroy every male, and
every woman that hath lien by man. And they found 12

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5. For they had made a great oath, &c.: *lit.* 'For the great oath (or curse) was on him who,' &c.

8. Jabesh-gilead: a city mentioned again in 1 Sam. xi; 2 Sam. ii. 4 f. The site is supposed to be that of the modern Meriamin, about seven miles from Pella. The stream near it, which enters the Jordan about ten miles south of Beth-shean (Beisān), still preserves the name Wādy Yābis.

11. Just as in Num. xxxi. 17, 18.

among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young virgins, that had not known man by lying with him: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

13 And the whole congregation sent and spake to the children of Benjamin that were in the rock of Rimmon,
14 and proclaimed peace unto them. And Benjamin returned at that time; and they gave them the women which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-
15 gilead: and yet so they sufficed them not. And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.

16 Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women
17 are destroyed out of Benjamin? And they said, There must be an inheritance for them that are escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not blotted out from Israel.
18 Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel had sworn, saying, Cursed be
19 he that giveth a wife to Benjamin. And they said, Be-

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12. Shiloh. See xviii. 31. This is the only mention of the Israelites' camp there.

13. the whole congregation. See xx. 1.

xxi. 16-25. *Wives are procured for the remaining Benjamites from Shiloh.* Some (two hundred) Benjamites are still without wives. They are recommended to carry off Israelitish maidens at a feast in Shiloh. The other Israelites undertake to make peace with the parents of these. Thus the oath will have been kept, for though the Shilonites are Israelites, they will not have *given* their daughters to Benjamin, for they are taken by force. This plan is carried out. The existence of Benjamin as a tribe is secured. The Israelites return home.

16. the elders of the congregation. So in Lev. iv. 15.

17. There must be an inheritance for them that are escaped of Benjamin. The meaning is doubtful. The Hebrew has only 'An inheritance of the escaped to (i. e. belonging to) Benjamin.' One of the Greek versions has 'How shall a lot be preserved for Benjamin as an inheritance, and a tribe be not,' &c.

hold, there is a feast of the Lord from year to year in Shiloh, which is on the north of Beth-el, on the east side of the high way that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. And they commanded 20
the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in
the vineyards; and see, and, behold, if the daughters of 21
Shiloh come out to dance in the dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. And it shall be, when their fathers or their 22
brethren come to complain unto us, that we will say unto them, Grant them graciously unto us: because we took not for each man *of them* his wife in battle: neither did ye give them unto them; else would ye now be guilty. And the children of Benjamin did so, and took 23

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19. a feast of the LORD: cf. the vintage feast in ix. 27.

Shiloh. See xviii. 31. **Beth-el.** See i. 22. **Shechem.** See ix. 1.

Lebonah, now el-Lubbān, three miles north-west of Shiloh.

21. to dance. In early times religious festivals were closely associated with social feasting and merriment. It was reserved for a later time, when the two elements were separated, to attach dancing to the secular side, and banish it by degrees from the sacred.

22. The Hebrew text of the latter part of this verse is unintelligible as it stands now.

For **Grant them graciously,** &c., some Greek MSS. have 'Have compassion on them, for each man did not receive a wife in the war,' i. e. the war with Jabesh-gilead did not provide wives for all. Others read 'Have compassion on them that they took, each his wife in war,' i. e. forcibly at Shiloh.

neither did ye give them unto them; else would ye now be guilty. This is not a translation of the Hebrew, which does not seem to give sense. By changing the pronunciation (not the letters) of two particles we get 'for if you yourselves had given (them) to them, you would now be guilty.'

The meaning of the whole is clear—that if the Shilonites had given their daughters freely to the Benjamites they would have broken their vow, but as they have been taken by force they are guiltless, and they are not bound to punish the captors.

them wives, according to their number, of them that
danced, whom they carried off: and they went and
returned unto their inheritance, and built the cities, and
24 dwelt in them. And the children of Israel departed
thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his
family, and they went out from thence every man to his
25 inheritance. In those days there was no king in Israel:
every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

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24. According to the story (see xx. 47) the Israelites must have been away from their homes for at least five or six months.

25. See xvii. 6, xviii. 1, xix. 1.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

INTRODUCTION

them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they carried off: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and built the cities, and
24 dwelt in them. And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his
25 inheritance. In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

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24. According to the story (see xx. 47) the Israelites must have been away from their homes for at least five or six months.

25. See xvii. 6; xviii. 1.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

INTRODUCTION

THE Book of Ruth appears in the Hebrew Bible as one of a collection of five short works called 'the five rolls,' in the third and latest Canon of the Jews (see Introduction to Judges, p. 3). It was thus one of the books that formed a kind of informal supplement to the two Canonical collections (the Law and the Prophets), until, on account of its use in the synagogue, it too received the stamp of canonicity, probably not long before the time of Christ. It was read at the Feast of Weeks. (Cf. Ryle, *The Canon of the O. T.* ch. vi.)

The story is too simple and short to need recapitulation here. In style it is very fresh, simple, and graceful. As a piece of literature it is the most charming short story in the O. T. The scene is laid in Beth-lehem of Judah; the heroine is a Moabitess. The time of the story is that in which 'the judges judged'; but in strong contrast with the wild deeds which were the material of the stories of this period recorded in the Book of Judges we have here the most delightful account of simple village life in time of peace. This contrast, however, does not, as some writers argue, involve any contradiction. The simplest country life can exist, and has often existed, side by side with a general state of warfare. In the four hundred and more years supposed to be covered by the period of the judges there is abundant room for such an incident as that of Ruth.

We have no information as to the date at which the book was written. It appears first as a part of the latest collection of Jewish canonical writings, and there is no reference to it in any other O. T. book. There is thus an interval of about a thousand years between the time when the events are said to have occurred and the first appearance of them in writing. There are in the book itself some indications that in its present form it is a work of the Exilic or post-Exilic times.

(1) In iv. 7 the writer thinks it necessary to explain the custom of drawing off the shoe in matters of 'redeeming' and 'exchanging,' as one which was not in use at the time when he wrote, and which might even be unintelligible to the reader without explanation. But in Deut. xxv. 9 f. the drawing off of the shoe in a matter of redeeming is enjoined, although there is a difference in the details connected with it. The writer of Ruth iv. 7 seems to contrast the earlier use of the shoe with the Deuteronomic, and if this be so he must have written later than 621 B.C.

(2) The genealogy in iv. 18–22 seems at first sight only to show that the work (or this passage) was written in or after the time of David. But there are two facts which make one suspicious of this genealogy. The first is that the compiler of the Book of Samuel, who is so full in his information as to David, apparently does not know anything of his ancestors beyond his father, and the only other record of this genealogy is in 1 Chron. ii, i. e. in a work written after B.C. 333 (see Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the O. T.* ed. 6, p. 518). The other fact is that Salmon or Salmah, who is here the father of Boaz, appears in 1 Chron. ii. 51, 54 as the father of Beth-lehem (the city), apparently indicating that the genealogy is an artificial one and the work of later times.

But it is possible that both these passages are additions to an earlier story. If we leave these on one side, what does the rest tell us? Here the evidence is chiefly linguistic, and the student of Hebrew can consult Driver's *Introduction* for details. Two facts are of importance :—

(1) That there are undoubtedly late words and phrases which point to an Exilic or post-Exilic date. (2) That in general style and particular phrases the narrative resembles the Book of Samuel rather than that of Chronicles. One of two alternatives seems to be possible: either that (1) a story was current in tradition from quite early times, and that in course of time later and more common words were occasionally substituted for the earlier; or that (2) a late writer well acquainted with the language of the Book of Samuel wrote the whole work. That the former is possible is clear from the history of the Russian 'historical songs,' which were only collected and written down for the first time at the beginning of last century, but which go back for nearly a thousand years, and have kept much of the ancient language, though later words and ideas have been introduced beside these. The latter alternative is also possible, and could easily be paralleled.

There are three very distinctive features in the Book of Ruth.

(1) It gives the genealogy of David, the king who represented in later times the ideal of the Hebrew monarchy.

(2) It gives special prominence to the fact that the greatest royal line of the Hebrews was descended from a Moabitess. Ruth's nationality is constantly mentioned (i. 22, ii. 2, 6, 21, iv. 5, 10), and she speaks of herself as a 'foreigner' (ii. 10).

(3) The action of the story turns on the recognition of the duty on the part of the nearest relative to marry the widow of a man who has died without male children.

The usual question asked is, which of these led to the composition of the work? As, however, it seems impossible to decide with certainty the *origin* of the book, we may alter the question and ask which of these features led to the composition of the work in its present form and preserved it, when apparently many other writings passed into oblivion. The third feature mentioned above—the action of Boaz as nearest kinsman—is all important for the action of the story, but does not strike the reader as the subject of it. From beginning to end it is about Ruth the Moabitess, and how she became the ancestress of an illustrious family in Israel. If this be true, the story must have been a favourite with those who did not share the zeal of Ezra and Nehemiah against mixed marriages. The Deuteronomic law (Deut. xxiii. 3 ff.) forbade any descendant of a Moabite to the tenth generation to 'enter into the assembly of Yahweh.' In Ezra ix–x and Neh. xiii we read of the attempt to enforce this law, and can see that it met with much opposition. It may be owing to this that the Book of Ruth achieved that popularity which saved it.

But its reception at a later date into the third Canon was doubtless due to its connexion, by the genealogy, with David, just as Ecclesiastes was made canonical for its supposed connexion with Solomon.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

THE BOOK OF RUTH

AND it came to pass in the days when the judges 1
judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a
certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the
country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.
And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name 2
of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon
and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they
came into the country of Moab, and continued there.
And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, 3

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i. 1–5. *The circumstances of Ruth's marriage.* In the days of the judges a man of Beth-lehem, his wife, and two sons were driven by a famine to migrate to the country of Moab. There the man died and the two sons married two women of Moab, Orpah and Ruth. In the course of ten years the sons also died, and the three widows were left alone.

1. in the days when the judges judged. As according to iv. 22 Boaz was the great-grandfather of David, the events must belong to the end of this period.

there was a famine in the land. Famines in Palestine are often mentioned in the O.T.: in the time of Abraham (Gen. xii. 10), of Isaac (xxvi. 1), of Jacob (xli. 56, &c.), of David (2 Sam. xxi. 1), of Elijah (1 Kings xvii).

(Asher v Zebulun)

Beth-lehem-judah. See on Judges xvii. 7.

the country of Moab. The high plateau, 4,300 feet above the Dead Sea, to the east of it and south of the Arnon. The relations of the Hebrews to the Moabites were often friendly, sometimes the reverse. (Cf. on Judges iii. 12.)

2. Elimelech ('God' or 'My God is king'). The name occurs in other Semitic languages also.

Naomi. See verse 20.

Ephrathites (cf. iv. 11). Ephratha here, and in 1 Sam. xvii. 12; Mic. v. 2, is the name of the district in which Beth-lehem was situated.

4 and her two sons. And they took them wives of the
women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and
the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there
5 about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died both of
them; and the woman was left of her two children and
6 of her husband. Then she arose with her daughters in
law, that she might return from the country of Moab:
for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the
7 LORD had visited his people in giving them bread. And
she went forth out of the place where she was, and her
two daughters in law with her; and they went on the
8 way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said
unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each of you to

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4. And they took them wives of the women of Moab. This marriage of Hebrew men with Moabite women is one of the most striking features of the story. Such intermarriage was common throughout Hebrew history, but was strictly forbidden in later times, and in Deut. xxiii. 3 ff. the law is especially severe against the descendants of Moabites. The constant repetition of Ruth's nationality seems to show why the book was so popular (see Introd., p. 178).

i. 6–18. *Ruth accompanies Naomi to Beth-lehem.* In the loneliness of a household, entirely bereft of men, Naomi's thoughts turn to her former home. She learns that the famine is over, and that there is now plenty. Accordingly she determines to return, and sets out accompanied by Orpah and Ruth. At some point in the journey she stops to bid farewell to her daughters-in-law, blesses them, kisses them, and with tears will send them back. But both would fain go with her, yet she urges them to return, for she cannot help them to establish new homes for themselves. Orpah is persuaded and turns back, but Ruth will not be persuaded by any means, and passionately declares her intention to share the lot of Naomi.

6. the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread: *lit.* 'to give them bread.' Yahweh 'visits' (i. e. 'gives attention to') men sometimes for good, as in Gen. l. 24 f., Exod. iv. 31, 1 Sam. ii. 21, and here; sometimes for punishment, as in Jer. vi. 15, xlix. 8, &c.

8. A parting rarely takes place in the house in the East. The

her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as
ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The LORD 9
grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house
of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted
up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Nay, 10
but we will return with thee unto thy people. And 11
Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go
with me? have I yet sons in my womb, that they may
be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your 12
way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should
say, I have hope, if I should even have an husband to-night,
and should also bear sons; would ye therefore 13
tarry till they were grown? would ye therefore stay from
having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me
much for your sakes, for the hand of the LORD is gone
forth against me. And they lifted up their voice, and 14

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departing relative or guest is usually accompanied for some distance on the road by friends.

to her mother's house: i. e. simply to her mother's part of the home, as in Song of Songs iii. 4.

11–13. Naomi's persuasion is based on a custom known as that of the Levirate marriage. By it, when a man died childless, his brother took the widow as his wife, and if a child was born it was counted to the dead man and not to the real father. The custom was very ancient, and was revised and included in the Deuteronomic law (Deut. xxv. 5–10), and was the occasion of one of the test questions put to Christ by the Sadducees (Matt. xxii. 23 ff.). It was not a custom peculiar to the Hebrews, but is found also in India and elsewhere.

The assumption in Naomi's words is that Orpah and Ruth will not be content to remain without husbands and without children. But she can do nothing to help them; she has no other sons to marry them, and even if she were herself to marry again and bear sons, would her daughters-in-law wait until these were grown up and able to marry them? It is hopeless to expect anything from her. Yahweh has decreed that she shall be without resource.

13. it grieveth me much for your sakes is a more probable and more natural translation than that given in the margin.

wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but
15 Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister
in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god:
16 return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following
after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where
thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people,
17 and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and
there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more
18 also, if aught but death part thee and me. And when
she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her,
19 she left speaking unto her. So they two went until they
came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they
were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved
20 about them, and *the women* said, Is this Naomi? And
she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara:

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14. Orpah kissed her mother in law. The Greek version adds 'and returned to her people.'

15. and unto her god. In entering the Hebrew household of Elimelech, Orpah and Ruth had become worshippers of Yahweh, the Hebrew God. Now in going back to her mother's house Orpah would naturally once more become a worshipper of the god of Moab. Ruth (in verse 16), in declaring that she will not leave Naomi, says 'thy God (shall be) my God.'

17. there will I be buried. As the family lived together, so the members of it were usually buried in one place, in the belief that in some way the family unity was preserved in Sheol. (Cf. Judges ii. 10, and the expression 'slept with his fathers' frequently in Kings.)

the LORD do so to me, and more also: a form of oath frequent in the books of Samuel and Kings.

i. 19-22. *The arrival in Beth-lehem.*

19. all the city was moved about them: as every small Eastern city or village is about the arrival of strangers at the present time.

20. Call me not Naomi, call me Mara. Naomi means 'pleasant, delightful.' Just as Gideon felt that the common greeting (Judges vi. 13) was an irony in the light of actual circumstances, so Naomi feels that her name is now quite inap-

for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I 21
went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again
empty: why call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath
testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?
So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her 22
daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the
country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the
beginning of barley harvest.

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty 2
man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name
was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, 2

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propriate. 'Call me not "delightful" but "bitter," for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.'

the Almighty: in Hebrew the proper name 'Shaddai.' (Cf. El Shaddai in Gen. xvii. 1, xxviii. 3, xxxv. 11, xliii. 14, xlviii. 3, and especially Exod. vi. 3, and 'Shaddai' alone, more than thirty times in Job.)

22. in the beginning of barley-harvest: that is, in April.

ii. 1–17. *Ruth meets Boaz as she gleans in his field.* No sooner are the two women settled in Beth-lehem than provision has to be made for their sustenance. Ruth therefore proposes that she shall go out to glean in some field where harvesting is being carried on. She happens to light on a field belonging to Boaz who was of the family of Elimelech. Boaz, seeing a stranger, inquires of the reapers who she is, and the overseer tells him. Thoroughly appreciating her attachment to Naomi, he speaks kindly to her, bids her glean without fear in his field alone, invites her to share the meal of the reapers, and charges his men to allow her to glean freely, and even to pull out something for her from the bundles, that she may have more. On beating out what she had thus gleaned in the day, she found she had about an ephah of barley.

1. a kinsman. The word so translated here is a general term meaning 'an acquaintance.' It is not until verse 20 that we learn he is a kinsman in a more definite sense, with certain rights and duties.

a mighty man of wealth, *lit.* 'a man of force' or 'power.' Thus the expression means 'a strong bold man' (Judges xi. 1, cf. vi. 12), 'a wealthy man' (2 Kings xv. 20), or 'a clever, shrewd man' (1 Kings xi. 28). Either the second or third meaning would be suitable here.

Let me now go to the field, and glean among the ears of
corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And
3 she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and
came and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her
hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging unto
4 Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. And, behold,
Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers,
The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The
5 LORD bless thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that
6 was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the
servant that was set over the reapers answered and said,
It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi
7 out of the country of Moab: and she said, Let me glean,
I pray you, and gather after the reapers among the
sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from
the morning until now, save that she tarried a little in
8 the house. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou
not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field,
neither pass from hence, but abide here fast by my
9 maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do
reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the
young men that they shall not touch thee? and when

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2. Permission to glean in harvesting was granted by custom in early times, and is enjoined in the Deuteronomic (Deut. xxiv. 19 ff.) and the Priestly Laws (Lev. xix. 9 f., xxiii. 22).

4. For other forms of greeting see Judges vi. 12, xviii. 15.

7. save that she tarried a little in the house. This is an attempt to translate what in Hebrew is unintelligible. The English version does not commend itself, for there was no 'house' out in the open fields where the reaping was going on. The Greek version suggests 'She has not rested (even) a little,' and the Latin has 'She has not returned home (even) for a short time.'

8, 9. Men do the reaping, 'maidens' follow them and bind the sheaves. The protection of Boaz meant much to Ruth, for evidently gleaners might be driven off by the workers, or exposed to rudeness.

thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that
which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on 10
her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto
him, Why have I found grace in thy sight, that thou
shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?
And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been 11
shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in
law since the death of thine husband: and how thou
hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy
nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest
not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a 12
full reward be given thee of the Lord, the God of Israel,
under whose wings thou art come to take refuge. Then 13
she said, Let me find grace in thy sight, my lord; for
that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast
spoken kindly unto thine handmaid, though I be not as
one of thine handmaidens. And at meal-time Boaz said 14
unto her, Come hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy
morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers:
and they reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and
was sufficed, and left thereof. And when she was risen 15
up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying,

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12. under whose wings thou art come to take refuge. Cf. Deut. xxxii. 11; Ps. xxxvi. 7, lvii. 1, xci. 4.

13. though I be (or 'am') **not as one of thine handmaidens,** but a Moabitess and so a 'stranger' or 'foreigner' (verse 10).

14. vinegar: a sour liquid produced by fermenting wine or certain juices of plants and used with food as a relish.

parched corn: ears of corn roasted on a hot plate. 1 Sam. xxv. 18, 2 Sam. xvii. 28.

15, 16. Boaz gives orders that not only is Ruth to be allowed to glean as before where the sheaves have been taken up, but she is to be permitted to gather among the standing sheaves. Moreover, as the cut corn is taken up by the gatherers to be tied into sheaves, some of it is to be carelessly dropped, so that she may have more.

Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her
16 not. And also pull out some for her from the bundles,
17 and leave it, and let her glean, and rebuke her not. So
she gleaned in the field until even; and she beat out
that she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of
18 barley. And she took it up, and went into the city:
and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and
she brought forth and gave to her that she had left after
19 she was sufficed. And her mother in law said unto her,
Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughtest
thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee.
And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had
wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought
20 to-day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter in
law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his
kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi
said unto her, The man is nigh of kin unto us, one of

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17. an ephah of barley: that is, about a bushel.

18. and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned. More probably, as in some Hebrew MSS. and the Latin and Syriac versions, 'She (Ruth) showed her mother-in-law,' &c.

and gave to her that she had left after she was sufficed: i. e. of the parched corn given her at the meal, some of which she had left. (See last clause of verse 14.)

20. one of our near kinsmen: one of our 'goels.' The Hebrew word 'goel' denotes one who redeems or resumes a claim. In the Hebrew family life the one whose duty it was to redeem the property, and take up the rights or duties of a man who had died, was his nearest male relative, hence the English translation. These rights and duties were various. If a man had died leaving property, the goel had the right to buy it before it was offered for sale publicly, and so keep it in the family (Jer. xxxii. 8–12). If a man had been killed the goel became the avenger of his blood. If during a man's lifetime he had been compelled to sell himself or his property to a stranger, it was the duty of the goel to redeem the one or the other (Lev. xxv. 47–49, 25). In this book the right of the goel to purchase Elimelech's land is associated with the duty of marrying Ruth 'to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance' (see iv. 5).

our near kinsmen. And Ruth the Moabitess said, Yea, 21
he said unto me, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men,
until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi said 22
unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter,
that thou go out with his maidens, and that they meet
thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the 23
maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest
and of wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother in
law.

And Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My 3
daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be
well with thee? And now is there not Boaz our kinsman, 2
with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth
barley to-night in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself 3
therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon
thee, and get thee down to the threshing-floor: but
make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall

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22. that they meet thee not: with intent to do injury or insult (as in Judges viii. 21, xv. 12, xviii. 25, in all of which the verb is translated 'fall upon'). Cf. verse 9.

23. wheat harvest followed that of the barley two or three weeks later.

iii. 1–18. *Ruth and Boaz.* Naomi, anxious to provide a home for Ruth, suggests a plan for calling the attention of Boaz to his rights as a 'goel.' After a day's work at winnowing barley, and after he has refreshed himself, Boaz lies down to sleep among the corn. At midnight he discovers Ruth lying at his feet. She claims his protection. This he gratefully promises, unless a nearer kinsman claims the right. In the morning he sends her home with six measures of barley. Naomi, knowing the energetic character of Boaz, bids Ruth now await quietly the course of events.

2. is there not Boaz our kinsman, &c.: rather 'is not Boaz our kinsman?'

to-night. After four o'clock in the evening and through the night a cool breeze sets in from the sea. This wind carries away the chaff in winnowing, and the coolness makes work pleasant.

the threshing-floor. See on Judges vi. 11. Here in Beth-lehem it is apparently lower than the city ('get thee *down*' in verse 3).

4 have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.
5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest I will do.
6 And she went down unto the threshing-floor, and did
7 according to all that her mother in law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and
8 laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a
9 woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a
10 near kinsman. And he said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter: thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou
11 followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou sayest: for all the city of my people doth know
12 that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am a near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer

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4. Ruth is to put herself entirely in the power of Boaz, in the belief that he will act honourably and vigorously (cf. verse 18).

7. his heart was merry: cf. Judges xvi. 25, xix. 6, 9, 22.

he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn, just as the peasants sleep on the threshing-floor during the time of threshing at the present day in Palestine.

9. a near kinsman: 'a goel' (see ii. 20).

11. all the city of my people, *lit.* 'all the gate of my people': because the gate of the city was the place where the people met for social, political, and legal discussions. (See iv. 1 ff.)

a virtuous woman, *lit.* 'a woman of force' or 'strength.' (See the second note to ii. 1.)

12. a kinsman: a 'goel' as above. The rights and duties of goel fell first upon the nearest of kin.

than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, 13
that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman,
well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not
do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part
of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth: lie down until
the morning. And she lay at his feet until the morning: 14
and she rose up before one could discern another. For
he said, Let it not be known that the woman came to
the threshing-floor. And he said, Bring the mantle that 15
is upon thee, and hold it; and she held it: and he
measured six *measures* of barley, and laid it on her: and
he went into the city. And when she came to her 16
mother in law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter?
And she told her all that the man had done to her.
And she said, These six *measures* of barley gave he me; 17
for he said, Go not empty unto thy mother in law.
Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know 18
how the matter will fall: for the man will not rest, until
he have finished the thing this day.

Now Boaz went up to the gate, and sat him down 4

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13. Tarry this night: for it would be dangerous for her to go home then with rough men about. (Cf. Song of Songs v. 7.)

14. before one could discern another, *lit.* 'before a man could distinguish his neighbour.'

15. the mantle: the wrapper worn over the other clothes.

he went. The marginal reading is better, 'she went.'

16. Who art thou? One dishonoured or one protected and honoured?

iv. 1–17. *Boaz purchases Elimelech's property and marries Ruth. A child is born from whom David descended.* Boaz went up to the city gate and sat there among the people until he saw the 'nearer kinsman' of Elimelech approaching. Then he called him and reminded him that he had the right to buy back the land of Elimelech, which Naomi had sold. At first inclined to do so, he is repelled when he is told that he must with the land take Ruth as wife, and count the first child to Mahlon and not to himself. He therefore solemnly renounces his right in the presence of

there: and, behold, the near kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat
2 down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city,
3 and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. And he said unto the near kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth the parcel of
4 land, which was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to disclose it unto thee, saying, Buy it before them that sit here, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he
5 said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to

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witnesses by drawing off his shoe. Boaz now claims the right for himself, acquires all that belonged to Elimelech and his heirs, and marries Ruth. The first child of this marriage is named Obed. He was the grandfather of David.

1. went up from the threshing-floor (cf. iii. 2).

the gate of an Eastern city is often a fairly large building, in the shade of which men may sit comfortably in the heat of the day. Near it is almost always a broad open space, where a market is held and the people meet for the interchange of news and settlement of disputes, claims, &c. (See Gen. xix. 1, xxiii. 10, xxxiv. 20; 1 Sam. iv. 13, marg., &c.)

2. the elders of the city (cf. Judges viii. 14) at this time would be the heads of leading families in the city.

3, 4. selleth. The Hebrew means 'has sold.' Naomi had now been back in Beth-lehem for some weeks, and apparently had sold the land. Custom, afterwards embodied in law (Lev. xxv. 25), provided that in such cases the land could be restored to the family if a kinsman ('goel') claimed his right to buy it back. That right belonged in the first place to the nearest of kin. If he declined to exercise it, then the next to him in kinship might do so.

if thou wilt not redeem it must be correct in spite of the Hebrew text. (See margin.)

5. thou must buy it also of Ruth. The text is faulty here, for

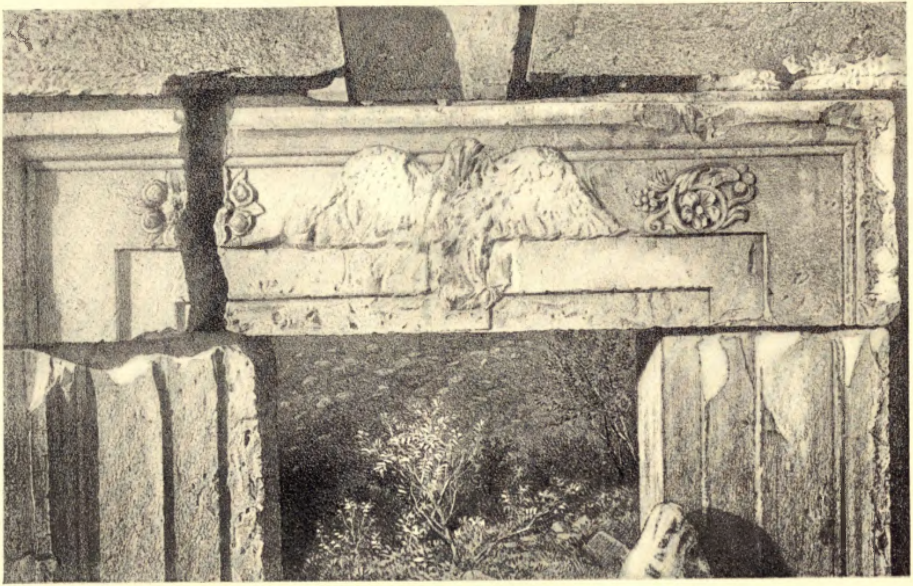

Photo: Pal. Expl. Fund

KEDESH NAPHTALI: TEMPLE GATEWAY

raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.
And the near kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for my- 6
self, lest I mar mine own inheritance: take thou my
right of redemption on thee; for I cannot redeem it.
Now this was *the custom* in former time in Israel con- 7
cerning redeeming and concerning exchanging, for to
confirm all things; a man drew off his shoe, and gave it
to his neighbour: and this was the *manner of* attestation
in Israel. So the near kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it 8
for thyself. And he drew off his shoe. And Boaz said 9
unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses
this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and
all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of
Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of 10
Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the
name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of
the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and
from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.
And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, 11
said, We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman

Naomi, not Ruth, sold the land. We should read 'thou must also buy Ruth,' exactly as in verse 10. The law of the Levirate marriage (see i. 11-13) only required that the brother of the dead should marry the widow if she had no son to inherit. Here the duty is laid on the next-of-kin, if he claim his right to buy the property, which would naturally fall to the son of the widow. Although the 'goel' is required in this verse 'to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance' (cf. verse 6), Ruth's son is ascribed not to Mahlon but to Boaz in the genealogy of verses 18-22.

7. An explanation of the act recorded in verse 8. The drawing off of the shoe to indicate the giving up of one's rights occurs again in Deut. xxv. 9. It is possible that in Psalm lx. 9, we have the inverse process of taking possession of, or claiming, by throwing the shoe on something.

For the relation of this verse to the date of the book, see Introduction.

8. The Greek version adds at the end 'and gave (it) to him.'

that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah,
which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou
worthily in Ephrathah, and be famous in Beth-lehem:
12 and let thy house be like the house of Perez, whom
Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD
13 shall give thee of this young woman. So Boaz took
Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went in unto
her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a
14 son. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the
LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a near
15 kinsman, and let his name be famous in Israel. And he
shall be unto thee a restorer of life, and a nourisher of
thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth
thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne
16 him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her
17 bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her
neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born
to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the
father of Jesse, the father of David.

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11. do thou worthily: *lit.* 'make power,' the noun being the same as that which occurs in the expression noted in ii. 1, iii. 11.

Ephrathah. See i. 2.

12. See Gen. xxxviii. According to verse 18 Boaz himself belonged to the descendants of Perez.

14. Now that a son is born to Ruth he is considered by the women as the 'goel' who takes up all the rights and duties of Naomi's son Mahlon.

15. is better to thee than seven sons. Seven is a round number; one could paraphrase 'than any number of sons.' This is because through Ruth's action in coming to Beth-lehem with her, and then in marrying Boaz and bearing a son, she has made Naomi the ancestress of a family in Israel.

17. the women her neighbours gave it a name. Cf. Luke i. 59.

Obed: i. e. 'one serving,' as in the name Obadiah, i. e. a servant of Yahweh.

Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez begat 18,19
Hezron; and Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat
Amminadab; and Amminadab begat Nahshon, and 20
Nahshon begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Boaz, and 21
Boaz begat Obed; and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse 22
begat David.

18–22. Genealogy of David showing his descent through Boaz (cf. the genealogies in Matt. i and Luke iii). An addition at a later time to the story of Ruth (see Introduction).

18. These are the generations of: the usual formula in the priestly writings of the Pentateuch (cf. Gen. ii. 4, vi. 9, x. 1, xi. 10, 27, &c.).

19. Perez. See Gen. xxxviii. 29, xlvi. 12, in both passages a son of Judah.

Hezron: in Gen. xlvi. 12; Num. xxvi. 21; 1 Chron. ii. 5 a son of Perez; but in 1 Chron. iv. 1 with Perez a son of Judah.

Ram: in Matt. i. 3 and Luke iii. 33 (marg.) called Aram, as in the Greek version here, and in 1 Chron. ii. 9 f. In 1 Chron. ii. 25 he is the *grandson* of Hezron.

Amminadab. See Ex. vi. 23; Num. i. 7, ii. 3; 1 Chron. ii. 10.

20. Nahshon. See Num. i. 7, ii. 3, x. 14.

Salmon or Salmah. 1 Chron. ii. 11 (cf verse 54).

that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephrathah, and be famous in Beth-lehem:
12 and let thy house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD
13 shall give thee of this young woman. So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went in unto her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a
14 son. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a near
15 kinsman, and let his name be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.
16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her
17 bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

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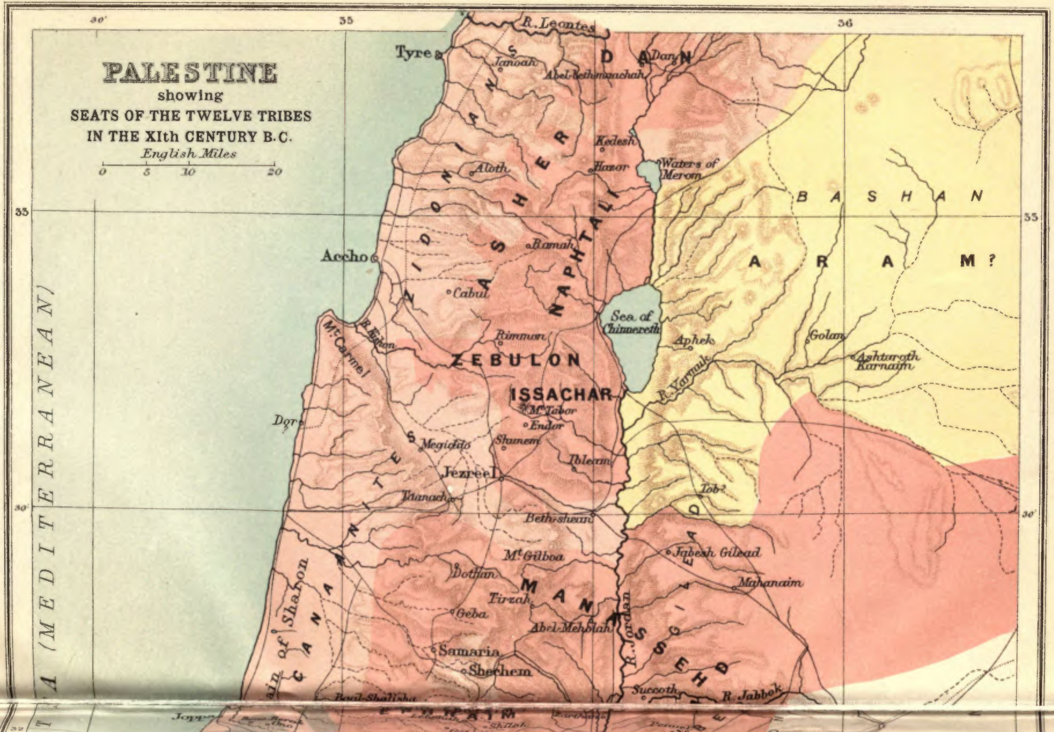
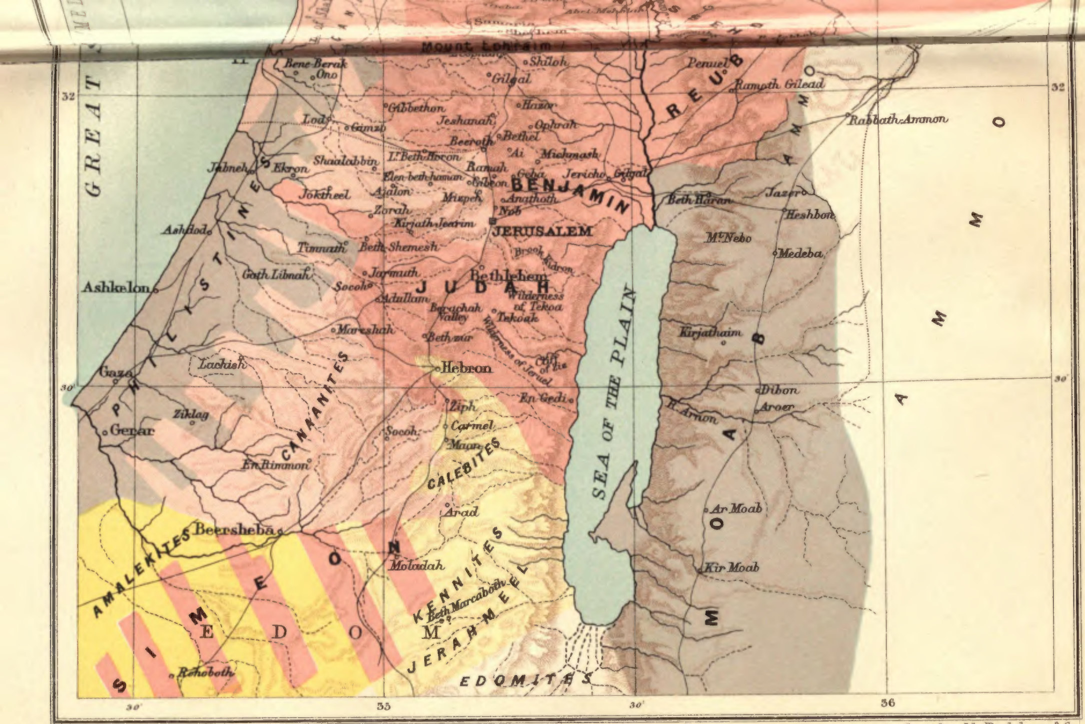


PALESTINE
showing
SEATS OF THE TWELVE TRIBES
IN THE XIth CENTURY B.C.

English Miles
0
5
10
20
30'
35
36
33
30'
(MEDITERRANEAN)
Tyre
R. Leontes
Janoah
Abel-Bethmaachah
DAN
Dan
Kedesh
Hazor
Waters of Merom
Aloth
ZIDONIANS
ASHER
NAPHTALI
Ramah
Accho
Cabul
Sea of Chinnereth
Rimmon
R. Kishon
Mt. Carmel
ZEBULON
ISSACHAR
Mt. Tabor
Endor
Shunem
Ibleam
Dor
Megiddo
Jezreel
Taanach
CANAANITES
Bethshean
Mt. Gilboa
Dothan
Tirzah
Geba
MANASSEH
Abel-Meholah
Samaria
Shechem
Plain of Sharon
R. Jordan
Succoth
R. Jabbok
GILEAD
Jabesh Gilead
Mahanaim
Tob?
BASHAN
ARAM?
Aphek
R. Yarmuk
Golan
Ashtaroth Karnaim


GREAT
Mount Ephraim
Shiloh
Gilgal
Bene-Berak
Ono
Penuel
REUB
Ramoth Gilead
Rabbath-Ammon
AMMON
Gibbethon
Hazor
Jeshanah
Ophrah
Lod
Gimzo
Beeroth
Bethel
Ai
Michmash
Shaalabbin
L.r Beth-Horon
Ramah
Jabneh
Ekron
Elen-beth-hanan
Gibeon
Geba
Jericho
Gilgal
BENJAMIN
Joktheel
Ajalon
Mizpeh
Anathoth
Beth Haran
Jazer
Heshbon
Zorah
Nob
Kirjath-Jearim
JERUSALEM
Ashdod
Timnath
Beth Shemesh
Brook Kidron
Mt. Nebo
Medeba
Gath Libnah
Jarmuth
Bethlehem
Ashkelon
Socoh
JUDAH
Wilderness of Tekoa
Adullam
Berachah Valley
Tekoah
Mareshah
Kirjathaim
Beth-zur
Wilderness of Jeruel
Cliff of Ziz
Lachish
Hebron
SEA OF THE PLAIN
Gaza
PHILISTINES
CANAANITES
Dibon
En Gedi
Ziph
R. Arnon
Aroer
Ziklag
Carmel
Gerar
Socoh
Maon
MOAB
En Rimmon
CALEBITES
Arad
Ar Moab
Beersheba
AMALEKITES
SIMEON
Moladah
Kir Moab
KENNITES
Beth Marcaboth
JERAHMEEL
EDOM
Rehoboth
EDOMITES
32
30'
35
36

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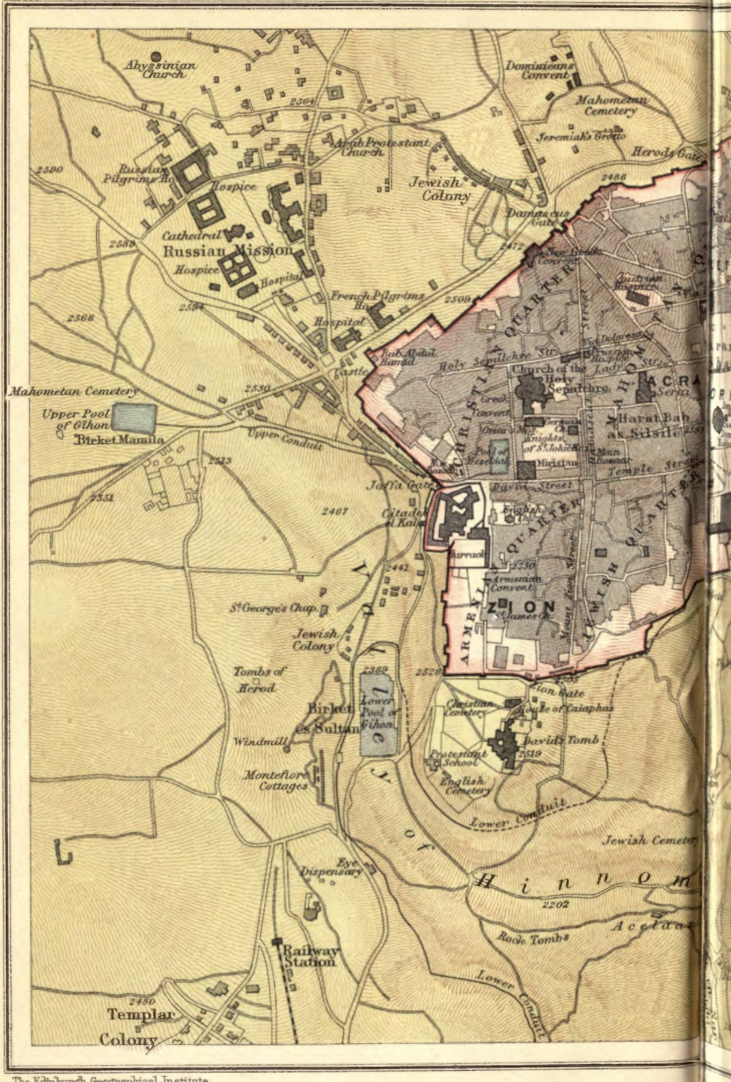
Abyssinian Church
Dominicans Convent
Mahometan Cemetery
Jeremiah's Grotto
Herods Gate
2564
Arab Protestant Church
Russian Pilgrims Ho.
Hospice
Jewish Colony
2590
2486
Damascus Gate
Cathedral
Russian Mission
Hospice
Hospital
2589
2472
New Greek Convent
Austrian Hospice
French Pilgrims Ho.
2509
2584
2568
Hospital
Bab Abdul Hamid
Holy Sepulchre Str.
Via Dolorosa
Prussian Hospice
Lady
Castle
Church of the Holy Sepulchre
CHRISTIAN QUARTER
MAHOMETAN QUARTER
ACRA
Serai
Mahometan Cemetery
2550
Greek Convent
Omar's Mosk
Upper Pool of Gihon
Birket Mamila
Harat Bab as Silsile
Knights of St. John
Upper Conduit
Pool of Hezekiah
Muristan
Bazaar
Temple Street
2513
Jaffa Gate
David Street
2551
English Ch.
2467
Citadel el Kalaa
ARMENIAN QUARTER
JEWISH QUARTER
Barrack
2441
2530
Armenian Convent
St. George's Chap.
ZION
St. James Ch.
Mount Zion Street
Jewish Colony
Tombs of Herod
2389
2528
Zion Gate
Christian Cemetery
House of Caiaphas
Birket es Sultan
Lower Pool of Gihon
Windmill
David's Tomb
2519
Protestant School
Montefiore Cottages
English Cemetery
Lower Conduit
Valley of Hinnom
Jewish Cemetery
Eye Dispensary
2202
Aceldama
Rock Tombs
Railway Station
Lower Conduit
2480
Templar Colony

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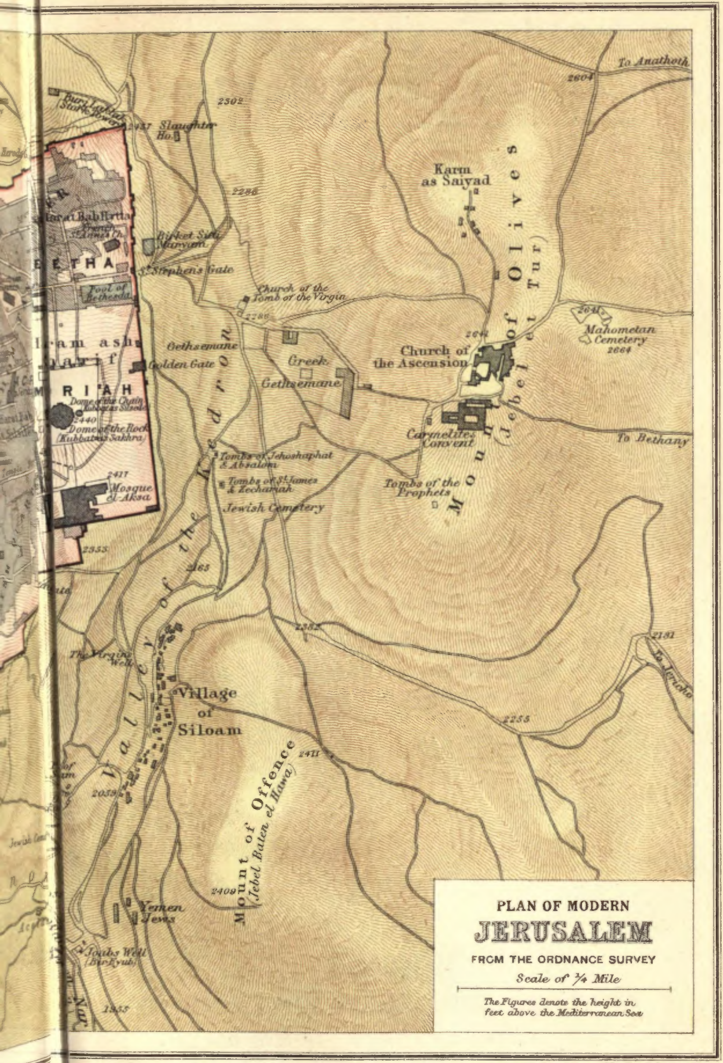
To Anathoth
2604
2302
Burj Laklak (Stork Tower)
2437
Slaughter Ho.
2286
Birket Sitti Maryam
St. Annes Ch.
ETHA
St. Stephens Gate
Pool of Bethesda
Church of the Tomb of the Virgin
2286
Karm as Saiyad
Mount of Olives (Jebel et Tur)
2641
Mahometan Cemetery
2664
Haram ash Sharif
Gethsemane
Golden Gate
Greek
Gethsemane
Church of the Ascension
MORIAH
Dome of the Chain (Kubbat as Silsile)
2440
Dome of the Rock (Kubbat as Sakhra)
Carmelites Convent
To Bethany
Tombs of Jehoshaphat & Absalom
Tombs of St. James & Zechariah
Tombs of the Prophets
2417
Mosque el-Aksa
Jewish Cemetery
Valley of the Kedron
2353
2165
2382
2181
To Jericho
The Virgins Well
Village of Siloam
2255
2411
Mount of Offence (Jebel Baten el Hawa)
2059
2409
Yemen Jews
Joabs Well (Bir Eyub)
1955

PLAN OF MODERN

JERUSALEM

FROM THE ORDNANCE SURVEY

Scale of ¼ Mile

The Figures denote the height in feet above the Mediterranean Sea

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The Century Bible

A MODERN COMMENTARY

Samuel

INTRODUCTION

REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES

ILLUSTRATIONS

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LONDON
THE CAXTON PUBLISHING COMPANY
CLUN HOUSE, SURREY STREET, W.C.

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MODERN JERUSALEM . . . . . . ,, ,,

THE BOOK OF SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION

I AND II SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PLACE OF SAMUEL IN THE O. T. CANON.

IN the ordinary Bible of English-speaking Protestants the books of the Old Testament will be found to be arranged in three groups, which have been termed, with sufficient accuracy, the *historical* (Genesis—Esther), the *poetical* (Job—Song of Songs[1]), and the *prophetical*[2] (Isaiah—Malachi). This arrangement, which was adopted directly from the Vulgate, the Latin Bible of the mediaeval Church, and ultimately from the Greek Version of the Seventy (LXX, see below, pp. 26 f.), differs considerably from the order in which the O. T. books are found in the manuscripts and printed editions of the Hebrew Bible. In these we also find three groups of books, representing the three stages in the historical growth of the Old Testament Canon, and named respectively the Law (*tôrā*), the Prophets (*nĕbî'îm*), and the Writings or Hagiographa (*kĕtûbîm*). The first division comprises the five books from Genesis to Deuteronomy, now generally termed the Pentateuch. The second is made up of two smaller groups or subdivisions, to which the Jewish authorities have given the names of the 'Former' and the 'Latter Prophets.' The 'Former Prophets' comprise the four books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, while the

---

[1] This is the more accurate title which the 'Song of Solomon' bears in the R. V., being a translation of the heading of the poem in the Hebrew Bible.

[2] The above nomenclature goes back at least to Gregory of Nazianzus (see Swete, *Introduction to the O. T. in Greek*, 205).

'Latter Prophets' are also reckoned to contain four books, viz. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the book of the twelve so-called Minor Prophets. The remaining books of the Canon find a place among the Hagiographa.

In this arrangement of its sacred Scriptures adopted by the Jewish Church, therefore, the Book of Samuel ranks among the writings of the Prophets, the significance of which for the proper understanding of the true aim of the Hebrew historians will appear in the sequel. The expression 'Book of Samuel' has been used advisedly in the above context—and also frequently in the following pages—since the present division of the Hebrew text into two books is of comparatively recent origin, having been introduced, along with a similar partition of Kings and Chronicles, by Daniel Bomberg, the famous Venetian printer, in the second edition of his Hebrew Bible (1517). In this Bomberg was simply following the lead of the Greek and Latin Versions, in which the books of Samuel and Kings together are entitled the First, Second, Third and Fourth Books of Kingdoms (LXX) or of Kings (Vulgate). From the Vulgate are derived also the titles which stand at the head of the two Books of Samuel in the Authorized Version (A. V.), 'the First (Second) Book of Samuel, otherwise called the First (Second) Book of the Kings.' The latter designation has now fallen into disuse, and has been rightly dropped in the Revised Version (R.V.).

That a book, which continues to relate the fortunes of Saul and David for nearly forty years after the death of Samuel, should bear his name is clearly not to be explained by the curious opinion of later Judaism that Samuel was its author. Even such a modification of this view as would accept him as the author of the first part of the book has been shown to be untenable by modern research into its literary structure (see sect. iv below). The explanation of the title is rather to be sought in the fact that the birth and call of Samuel form the theme of the opening chapters, or in the prominent part played by the Seer of Ramah in the establishment of the monarchy. The first two kings, it will be remembered, each received consecration at his hands (1 Sam. x. 1, xvi. 13). We have here, in short, the Book of Samuel 'the King-maker.'

II. ARRANGEMENT AND CONTENTS OF SAMUEL.

With the exception of the Psalter, no O. T. book gives such unmistakable evidence of systematic arrangement on the part of its editor or editors as does the Book of Samuel. The presence, at certain well-defined intervals, of three concluding summaries from editorial hands clearly betrays the design of a fourfold division of our book. The summaries in question are (1) 1 Sam. xiv. 47–51, a brief *résumé* of the wars of Saul, with an equally brief family record; (2) 2 Sam. viii, which is entirely occupied with a more extended summary of David's campaigns (1–14) and a list of the chief officers of his court (15–18), with which the family lists now found in 2 Sam. iii. 2–5 and v. 13–16 were in all probability originally associated; (3) 2 Sam. xx. 23–26, which is practically a duplicate of viii. 15 ff. (for the explanation see p. 25). The remaining four chapters of the book are evidently of the nature of an appendix.

As regards the contents, it may be said, briefly, that in the Book of Samuel we have all that the editors of the exilic and early post-exilic periods thought worthy of preservation regarding the greatest of the Hebrew kings, his predecessor, Saul, and the imposing religious personality who forms the connecting link between the monarchy and the period of the Judges.

The following synopsis shows the four divisions of the book just indicated with appropriate subdivisions. For convenience of expository study, the latter have been further subdivided in the body of the commentary into sections, the extent and contents of which are indicated at the proper places in the notes.

First Division. I SAMUEL I—XIV.

SAMUEL AND SAUL.

A. i–vii. The Early Life and Judgeship of Samuel.

B. viii–xii. The Establishment of the Monarchy.

C. xiii–xiv. Saul's First Campaign against the Philistines.

Second Division. I SAMUEL XV—2 SAMUEL VIII.

SAUL AND DAVID.

A. xv–xx. The Rejection of Saul and Introduction of David. Saul's Jealousy and its Results.

B. xxi–xxvi. David's flight from Court and his subsequent Adventures as an Outlaw Captain in the South.

C. xxvii–xxxi. David as the Vassal of the King of Gath. The Philistine Invasion and Death of Saul and Jonathan.

D. 2 Sam. i–viii. David installed as King, first of Judah, then of all Israel.

Third Division. 2 SAMUEL IX—XX.

AT THE COURT OF DAVID.

A. ix. David's Kindness to Meri-baal.

B. x–xii. David's War with the Ammonites, including the Affair of Bath-sheba.

C. xiii–xiv. Amnon and Absalom.

D. xv–xix. The Story of Absalom's Rebellion.

E. xx. The Revolt of Sheba.

Fourth Division. 2 SAMUEL XXI—XXIV.

AN APPENDIX OF VARIOUS CONTENTS.

A. xxi. 1–14. The Famine and its Consequences for the House of Saul.

B. xxi. 15–22. A Series of Exploits against the Philistines.

C. xxii. David's Thanksgiving Hymn.

D. xxiii. 1–7. David's 'Last Words.'

E. xxiii. 8–39. David's Two Orders of Knighthood.

F. xxiv. David's Census and its Consequences.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLDER HISTORICAL LITERATURE.

Apart from the five books of the Law, the more strictly historical books of the O. T. form two distinct and, to some extent, parallel groups, an earlier group comprising the books of the 'Former Prophets,' Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, as explained above, and a later group now included among the Hagiographa, and consisting of the two Books of Chronicles, with Ezra and Nehemiah, the four having originally formed a single continuous narrative in the order given. In addition to this difference of position in the Jewish Canon, the two groups are sharply distinguished from each other by the nature of their general interests, and by a marked difference of religious standpoint. The later group, as represented by the Books of Chronicles, is dominated by ecclesiastical interests [1], and reflects throughout the tone and standpoint of the Priestly Code (for which see Bennett's *Genesis* in this series, pp. 34 ff.). The earlier group, to which the Book of Samuel belongs, requires and will repay a more extended study.

(*a*) *The beginnings of historical literature among the Hebrews.* 'The making of history,' writes Professor Moore of Andover [2], 'precedes the writing of history, and it is often found that the impulse to write history is first given by some great achievement, which exalts the self-consciousness of a people and awakens the sense of the memorable character of what it has done.' As illustrative instances Moore cites the struggle of Greece with Persia, the second Punic war and its influence on Rome, and the empire of Charles the Great among the Germans. In the same way, the first impulse to historical writing among the Hebrews was given by the prolonged struggle with the Philistines for the mastery of Palestine, a struggle which seems to have absorbed almost the whole energies of Saul during his comparatively short reign (1 Sam. xiv. 52), and which was carried to a victorious issue by his great successor.

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[1] 'The Chronicler's work is an ecclesiastical history; the Jewish Church in Jerusalem is its subject' (Moore, *EBi.* ii. 2085).

[2] See his admirable article 'Historical Literature' in the second volume of Cheyne and Black's *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (denoted in these pages by *EBi.*).

From another but closely connected point of view, it may without hesitation be affirmed that those material conditions, which have everywhere been found to be indispensable for the cultivation of literature, were first secured to the Hebrews in the reigns of David and Solomon. The former was a capable statesman as well as an able general. To David was due not only the consolidation of the tribes of north and south into a united people, but the introduction of a stable government with an administration suited to the needs of the time. Under the more peaceful reign of his son the kingdom of Israel reached a height of material prosperity to which the land had been a stranger for centuries. With so much in that glorious time to re-create and quicken the national consciousness, enfeebled by two centuries of tribal jealousy and dissension—witness the Song of Deborah (Judges v)—and to fire the imaginations of the more thoughtful spirits of the age, it would be surprising if no literature should spring to birth. Doubtless the most of what was sung and written in the 'golden prime' of Solomon has long since perished. But one historical work, at least, has in great part survived, perhaps the finest flower of Hebrew narrative in the O. T. This is the history of David's family and court which now occupies chapters ix–xx of 2 Samuel, and is continued in the first two chapters of the Book of Kings. Whether the other early narrative, which opens with 1 Sam. ix and tells of the institution of the monarchy and of David's relations to Saul, is part of the same document, as some recent scholars maintain, must here be left an open question (see pp. 21 f.). In any case its date can scarcely be later than the reign of Rehoboam (cf. 1 Sam. xxvii. 6). The view to which expression has just been given that the first essays in historical writing among the Hebrews were made soon after the national revival under David, with the great events of the recent past for their theme, and that only afterwards was the history of the remoter past taken in hand, is the view of most recent students of Hebrew historiography (Stade, Kittel, Budde, Moore, Kent, &c.).

(*b*) *The two main types of ancient history*[1]. In all ancient literatures the oldest type of historical writing is the *narrative* or *descriptive* type. The writer's aim is to set down the incidents he deems worthy of preservation in such a way as to convey to his readers an accurate impression of their nature and sequence. It is no part of his purpose to draw religious or other lessons from the facts he records. The story is left to point its own moral. Of this kind of history 2 Sam. ix–xx, above referred to, is a classical illustration (see further, pp. 20 ff. and note on 2 Sam. xii, p. 244).

In almost all cases the narrative type of history is succeeded, but not superseded, by the *didactic* type. For the didactic or pragmatic historian the story of the past is not the bare record of a series of successive happenings[2], but a storehouse of political, moral, and religious lessons for the men of the present. That the historian's chief end is the education of the race has been firmly held by some of our most eminent English historians. Thus a recent writer, himself an historian, has said of the late S. R. Gardiner: 'In his conception, if history was not directly didactic, the writing of it is a vain labour; and the true scientific historian is he who most conscientiously seeks to ascertain and present the lessons which the past has to offer[1].'

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[1] With the following paragraphs compare the fuller treatment of this topic by Professor Skinner in the Introduction to his commentary on *Kings* in this (Century Bible) series, pp. 5 ff. and Moore's article cited above.

[2] An expression suggested by Droysen's almost untranslatable distinction between nature as 'das Nebeneinander des Seienden,' and history as 'das Nacheinander des Gewordenen.'

Now, among the Hebrews, it was pre-eminently the prophets of the eighth century before Christ who first made this conception of history a feature of their teaching. 'The prophets of the eighth century interpreted Yahweh's dealings with His people upon a consistent moral principle; the evils which afflict the nation and the graver evils which are imminent are Divine judgements upon it for its sins . . . The application of this principle by the writers of the seventh and sixth centuries makes an era in Hebrew historiography; narrative history is succeeded by pragmatic history' (Moore). In 1 Sam. xv we have a good example of the pragmatic or didactic treatment of the tradition [2] respecting Saul's rejection by Samuel at Gilgal. The historical incident is used in the spirit of the prophets to enforce the moral lesson that obedience 'is better than sacrifice' (1 Sam. xv. 22).

(*c*) *The Deuteronomic school of historians.* The promulgation of the legislation of Deuteronomy in the eighteenth year of Josiah (622-621 B.C.) gave an immediate and far-reaching impulse to the didactic method of historical writing. The quickly following calamity of the Exile set the seal of the Divine approval upon the prophetic interpretation of the past, and in the Exile, accordingly, the didactic treatment of the pre-exilic history reached its highest development. From the circumstance that the devout writers and editors of this period (*circa* 620–

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[1] P. Hume Brown in Chambers' *Encycl. of English Literature* (1903), vol. iii. 631. Cf. the same writer's judgement on Carlyle and Froude, ibid. 500.

[2] On 'the popular misconception that the word "tradition" implies that the literature thus designated is necessarily untrustworthy and unhistorical,' see the excellent remarks of Professor Kent in his *Beginnings of Heb. History* (1904), p. 4.

450 B.C.) drew their inspiration and their ideals mainly from the Book of Deuteronomy, they have appropriately been named the Deuteronomic or Deuteronomistic school of historians. It is to this school that we owe, in the main, the historical books of the O. T. from Joshua to Kings. This is not to be understood as implying that the chief part of the contents of these books was then first committed to writing, but in the sense that the books in question received, if not the precise form in which we now have them (see sect. vi), yet a form not essentially different at the hands of editors of this school.

The principles which guided the Deuteronomic editors in their treatment of the older narrative histories have been so fully and so ably expounded by Professor Skinner in his Introduction to the Books of Kings (pp. 14 ff.; cf. Thatcher's *Judges*—also in the present series—pp. 5 ff.)[1], that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon them here (but see on 1 Sam. xii. 14), all the more as these principles are but little in evidence in the Book of Samuel compared with their more detailed and systematic application to the Books of Judges and Kings (cf. sect. v below). It must suffice to say, in general terms, that the primary aim of the exilic historians of Israel was not to hand down to posterity a minute and objective history of the chosen people, but *to interpret to their contemporaries God's discipline in history of His people* in the light of the teaching of Deuteronomy, and of the great prophets of whose inspired thoughts Deuteronomy is, in a sense, the literary deposit. This conscious aim determined the selection of their materials from the fuller historical records at their command; hence the scant treatment which Saul and his reign receive in 1 Samuel; hence the reduction to bald summaries of David's relations with the

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[1] See also Moore, *EBi.* ii. 2079, and more fully Wildeboer's chapter on the Deuteronomic conception of history in his *Litteratur des alten Testaments*, 229 ff., esp. 242 f.

Philistines and the other neighbouring states, and of the internal administration of his realm in 2 Samuel; hence, too, the many regrettable omissions in the political history of North Israel in the Book of Kings.

Nevertheless these earnest students and teachers of the Exile were also in their measure prophets, for they were in a very real sense God's 'interpreters' (Isa. xliii. 27 R.V.), men on whom God had put His Spirit (Num. xii. 29) as a spirit of interpretation. The results of their labours have found their proper place in the Hebrew Canon among 'the prophets.' History, in short, as written and compiled by such men is 'prophecy teaching by example[1].' Its lessons, in consequence, are not 'of an age' but for all time.

(*d*) *The literary methods of Hebrew historians.* Before we pass from the subject of this section a word requires to be said regarding the literary methods of Hebrew historians generally and of the Deuteronomic school in particular. The primary aim of this school, we have just seen, was to impress upon the minds and hearts of their readers the moral and religious lessons which the Divine discipline of Israel was so fitted to teach them. In their pursuit of this aim the method adopted—and it is the method of oriental historiography in general (see Robertson Smith's *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed., p. 328; cf. 113 f.)—presents a striking contrast to the methods of the modern historian of the West. The latter sets himself to master his authorities and original sources, and then seeks to give literary form to the history in his own words and his own style. The Hebrew historian, on the other hand, did this but rarely unless when, as in the case of the earliest of all, he had to draw his materials from oral tradition. As a rule he was content to reproduce, as far as was consistent with his purpose, the very words of his documentary sources, weaving his extracts into a connected narrative, while scrupulously preserving their colour and style. It was enough if he supplied the necessary connecting links, harmonized, so far as was deemed advisable or possible, the more glaring discrepancies, and perhaps passed judgement on the actors and the incidents from his higher moral and religious standpoint.

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[1] The aphorism is Moore's (*EBi.* ii. 2079), and is a happy adaptation of Bolingbroke's dictum (from Dionysius of Halicarnassus) that 'history is philosophy teaching by example.'

This uniform characteristic of Hebrew historiography explains why modern scholars prefer to speak of the compiler, rather than of the author, of Samuel or Kings or the Pentateuch. Fortunately also, it makes possible, in large measure, the task which lies before us in the next section of this Introduction.

IV. THE SOURCES OF THE BOOK OF SAMUEL

Like the Pentateuch, and like the other books associated with it in the canonical group of the 'Former Prophets,' Samuel has disclosed itself to modern research as a compilation from a number of previously existing historical documents. In the preceding section we have learned something of the aims and methods of the compilers and editors who gave to the historical books what was essentially their present form, and how the fidelity with which they have reproduced these older documents with all their original characteristics of style and representation has enabled modern scholars to separate and study, each by itself, the works of these earliest historians of Israel.

The credit of having first laid down the main lines along which the literary analysis of Samuel must proceed belongs, above all, to Julius Wellhausen[1], with whom the names of Budde and Cornill must be honourably associated. With regard to the results of the critical labours of these and other recent scholars, details of which will presently be laid before the reader, it may be said that there is now a general consensus of opinion among critical students as to the broad lines of demarcation between the various 'sources' of the book. On the other hand, there is still considerable divergence, as will appear in the sequel, as regards the number, age, and mutual relations of the documents which the analysis has disclosed, and as to the details of the literary process by which the Book of Samuel has gradually assumed its present form. While the general outline of this process is sufficiently clear as involving three distinct stages of growth—represented by the original documents circulating independently, the Deuteronomic edition and the post-Deuteronomic or present canonical edition respectively (see below)—there is much of the detail that admits of more than one plausible explanation, so that Stade's verdict is not far from the truth that 'the history of the origin of the Books of Samuel, in spite of the great predominance of the ancient sources, is very complicated' (article 'Samuel,' *EBi.* iv. 4274). In a popular work such as the present it would manifestly be out of place to enter into the minute details of the literary and historical criticism of Samuel; it will be sufficient to indicate in broad outline the nature of the critical argument.

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[1] In his edition (the fourth) of Bleek's *Einleitung in das alte Test.* (1878), afterwards in his *Comp. des Hexateuchs*; for these and the other works referred to see the bibliographical list in the Appendix, note B (cf. H. P. Smith, *Samuel*, xxviii f.).

(*a*) *Analysis of 1 Sam. i–xiv.* Our study of the sources may begin with an examination of the structure of the first of the four divisions of Samuel, in which the composite nature of the present narrative is peculiarly evident. The most promising starting-point is provided by the second subdivision, 1 Sam. viii–xii[1], which gives a detailed account of the introduction of the monarchy and of Saul's election as the first king of Israel. The following is a summary of the contents of these five chapters as they now stand. Moved to action by the unworthy character and conduct of his sons, the elders of Israel approach the aged Samuel, as the theocratic representative of Yahweh, with the request that he would appoint a king to rule over Israel, after the manner of the surrounding nations. This request Samuel regards as treason to Yahweh, but is advised by Him to accede to the people's demand (ch. viii). At this juncture Samuel makes the acquaintance, under interesting circumstances, of a Benjamite noble, Saul, the son of Kish, and is divinely informed that this is the man whom Yahweh has appointed to be the deliverer of His people from the Philistine oppression and their future king. Saul is anointed by Samuel (x. 1), and instructed as to certain signs by which Yahweh's gracious purpose with regard to him will be confirmed. The Divine choice is afterwards ratified by the arbitrament of the sacred lot at Mizpah (chapters ix–x). As yet, however, Saul is only king *de iure*, but soon afterwards an opportunity occurs for him to show his capacity for military leadership (xi. 1 ff.)—he had meanwhile returned to his farm—and the people are thereafter summoned by Samuel to Gilgal 'to renew the kingdom there' (xi. 14). At Gilgal Saul is solemnly confirmed in the kingship, and is henceforth king *de facto*. Samuel at the same time takes an impressive farewell of the people, reserving only to himself the office of intercessor with Yahweh in the new and doubtful situation in which his compatriots have placed themselves (xii).

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[1] As an illustration of method the study of this section has been given in more detail than is possible or necessary in the case of the others.

Now it is impossible to read the complete narrative in these chapters without receiving the impression that *the dominant note is one of hostility to the monarchy as an institution*. But a closer examination reveals the fact that this attitude is not maintained throughout, but is confined to certain sections of the narrative. Viewing chapter viii in the light thrown upon it by the preceding chapter, of which it is the continuation, we see that Israel is conceived as living in an ideal state of peace and security under theocratic government, untroubled by foes from without or from within (vii. 14). The request for a human king, 'to judge us like all the nations' (viii. 5), is an act of rebellion against Yahweh, their true King (xii. 12), since the theocracy is the form of government under which His people were intended by God to fulfil their mission to the world.

In chapter ix, on the other hand, the condition of Yahweh's 'people Israel' is one of sore 'affliction' (see note on ix. 16) at the hands of the Philistines. Yahweh has 'heard their cry,' and of His own free will resolves to give them a king in the person of Saul. *Here the monarchy is God's gracious gift to His people.* In this chapter, furthermore, the picture of Samuel as the comparatively unknown seer of a country village (ix. 6 ff.) offers a striking contrast to that of Samuel the theocratic judge of all Israel, the all-powerful vicegerent of Yahweh, as he appears in chapters vii, viii and xii.

Following the clues thus provided (1) by the radically opposed attitudes to the monarchy, and (2) by the divergent representations of the then political condition of Israel and of the person of Samuel, it is not difficult to analyse chapters viii–xii into two mutually independent documents. These, for reasons to be given presently, we shall denote by the symbols **D** and **M**. We have then:—

D (hostile to the monarchy): viii. 1–22 [closely connected with ch. vii], x. 17–24, xii. 1–25.

M (favourable to the monarchy): ix. 1—x. 16, xi. 1–11, 15 [continued xiii. 2–7^a, 15^b–18, 23, xiv. 1–46, 52].

The verses not found in either of the above series are from the hand of the compiler or redactor (R, see p. 24), and are due to the necessity of providing, so far as this could be done, a chronologically and otherwise consistent narrative from the two documents at his command. There is good reason, also, for believing that the compiler has, from the same motive (see in detail, p. 74), been led to rearrange the sections of **D** in an order different from that in which they originally stood. Since the document beginning ix. 1, and continued in chs. xiii–xiv, is so entirely favourable to the institution of the Monarchy, the introduction and early history of which it is clearly its writer's purpose to record, we propose in the following pages to indicate it by the symbol **M**. The other, which, as will immediately appear, betrays an unmistakable affinity with the Book of Deuteronomy, will be denoted by **D**.

As to the relative value of the two documents as authorities for the history of Samuel and Saul, there can be no question that **M** is more in harmony with the actual conditions of the time, as these are reflected in the previous and subsequent course of Hebrew history. In **D** we have rather an illustration of the later idealization of the earlier portions of the history of Israel, such as we find in the ideal representation of the conquest of Canaan in the Book of Joshua as contrasted with the more historical account in the first chapter of Judges (cf. p. 68). The ideal traits in **D**'s treatment of the period of Samuel is still more apparent in ch. vii. Take, for example, the statement that 'the Philistines came no more within the border of Israel . . . all the days of Samuel,' which is directly at variance not only with the equally precise statement in 1 Sam. xiv. 52, but with all that we know of the historical circumstances which gave birth to the monarchy. The numerous resemblances in expression and general standpoint between those chapters of 1 Samuel assigned to **D**, on the one hand, and the Book of Deuteronomy and the characteristically Deuteronomic parts of Judges and Kings on the other, have been convincingly demonstrated by Löhr in his recent edition of Thenius' commentary, pp. xxii ff.[1]

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[1] That the chapters in question are a product of the Deuteronomic school is also maintained by Wellhausen, Kuenen,

As to the date of **D**, it is impossible to speak with certainty. Its pronounced hostility to the monarchy, to which reference has so frequently been made, implies a long and unhappy experience of monarchical government. This fact, together with certain linguistic features, especially in ch. xii (see p. 91), seems to point to a date in the Exile. If such is indeed the case we have in this document the bitter reflections of a member of the Deuteronomic school, who regarded the defections and excesses of the monarchy as largely responsible for the sins of the people, and the consequent destruction of the state.

Passing now to the opening chapters of the book, we find in chapters i–iii, when freed from the later expansions ii. 1–10 and ii. 27–36 (see pp. 42, 48), a fragment of a biography of Samuel (hence the symbol **S**). Since its representation of the *prophet*, who is held in esteem throughout 'all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba' (iii. 20), differs materially both from the *theocratic judge* of ch. vii, and from the *seer of Ramah* in ch. ix, it must be regarded as an independent source. If, as is at least probable, xv. 1—xvi. 13 originally formed part of this biography, its author may have been a contemporary of Jeremiah (see on xv. 22 and xvi. 7).

In chapters iv–vi, finally, we have still another document which, from the antique cast of the religious ideas underlying it, particularly as regards the Ark (hence our symbol **A**), must be of a considerably earlier date than the preceding chapters. It is now a torso, both the commencement and the continuation having been dropped by the compiler (pp. 56, 67). From the fact that no explanation is now given of how the 'affliction' of Israel at the hands of the Philistines (ix. 16) was brought about, some scholars are of opinion that chapters iv–vi (see on vii. 1; cf. iv. 9) originally formed part of the document we have termed **M**.

Stade, H. P. Smith, Nowack, and others in opposition to Budde and Cornill, who regard them as, with 1 Sam. i–iii, a continuation of the Hexateuch source E, which has been revised merely by a Deuteronomic hand (see further, p. 22).

As in a similar case which will emerge in the sequel, this view has much to recommend it, but we prefer, here as there (pp. 21 f.), to leave the question an open one.

(*b*) *Analysis of 1 Sam. xv—2 Sam. viii.* By the insertion of the concluding summary (xiv. 47–51) the Deuteronomic editor or redactor (**R**) would indicate that henceforth the central figure of the narrative is to be no longer Saul but another. The way is prepared for the entry of this new character upon the scene by the rejection of Saul (xv), which is followed immediately by the consecration of his successor (xvi. 1–13), both incidents, as has been already indicated (see more fully pp. 110, 116 below), being probably derived from the prophetic biography of Samuel (**S**).

With the second introduction of David (cf. the introductory note, p. 116) in xvi. 14 ff. the problem of the literary analysis becomes complicated with another involving the question of the original text of the two following chapters. These problems, both literary and textual, will be found discussed in some detail in the notes, where the reasons are set forth for adopting the shorter form presented by the Greek text. The additional matter now found in our Massoretic text has been stamped as a later expansion of the true text by having the symbol **Z** prefixed. Apart from this post-redactional matter, to which such remarkable sections as xix. 18–24 and xxi. 10–15 fall to be added, the whole of the narrative of this division (more precisely from xvi. 14 to 2 Sam. vi. 23) has, with comparatively few exceptions, been drawn from the early document (**M**), which gave us the most trustworthy account of the introduction of the monarchy[1]. These exceptions consist for the most part of such incidents of David's chequered life at this period as must have formed the favourite themes of the popular tradition of the time (hence the symbol **T**, see pp. 135 f.). The most interesting of these is the tale of David's magnanimity to Saul now found in 1 Sam. xxiii. 19—xxiv. 22, which is almost certainly a variant of the older, and, in some respects, more trustworthy form of the same incident as related in ch. xxvi[1]. To the documentary source or sources from which the compiler derived these popular traditions we have no clue.

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[1] Compare the following list of mutually-connected passages in this division of Samuel given by Driver (after Wellhausen) in *LOT.*^{6} p. 184, footnote : 1 Sam. xviii. 7 and xxix. 5; xviii. 25, 27 (LXX) and 2 Sam. iii. 14; 1 Sam. xxii. 20 ff. and xxiii. 9 ff.; xxiii. 2, xxx. 8 and 2 Sam. ii. 1, v. 19; 1 Sam. xxv. 2 ff. and xxx. 26 ff.; xxvii. 3 and xxx. 5.

The promise of the permanence of David's dynasty recorded in 2 Sam. vii—a passage of cardinal importance for the study of the evolution of Israel's Messianic Hope—is recognized on all hands as at once a document apart, and as a product of the Deuteronomic school. Since a descendant of David is still evidently on the throne of Judah, its date may with some confidence be assigned to the period *circa* 600 B. C.

Chapter viii, finally, is the editorial summary, not merely closing this division of the book, but, as we shall see reason to believe (see next section), originally forming the conclusion to the first or Deuteronomic edition of Samuel. The literary feature of 1 Sam. xv—2 Sam. viii is thus the predominance of one leading authority (**M**), which has been supplemented by the Deuteronomic editor from other sources (**S**, **D**, **T**), the whole having, in the course of transmission, received a number of post-redactional expansions (**Z**), for which see section vi.

(*c*) *The unity of 2 Sam. ix–xx.* The third division of Samuel is to all intents and purposes a literary unit[2]. In virtue of their perfect style and their life-like portraiture, the amount of picturesque detail and the often dramatic intensity of the action, these twelve chapters constitute the finest, as they are the earliest, specimen of continuous prose narrative in the O. T. The writer's interest is centred throughout in the person of David and in the members of his family and court (hence the symbol **C**). With the same impartiality are recorded David's loyalty to the memory of his dearest friend (ix), his own great sin and the sins of his family, which brought scandal on his court and sorrow on his old age. The original commencement has been dropped (see on ix. 1), but the continuation and probable close are still found in 1 Kings i–ii. The freshness and vividness of the narrative and the abundance of minute personal detail compel us to see in the author one who either himself played a part in the events he so graphically records, or has derived his information, at first hand, from those whose names are for ever enshrined in his pages[1].

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[1] For numerous other duplicate narratives in Samuel, see under 'doublets' in the Index.

[2] See Driver, *LOT.*⁶ 183, for the mutual connexion of the incidents, and cf. the introductory note p. 250 below.

The abruptness with which **C** now opens at 2 Sam. ix. 1 has been already mentioned. Are Budde and Cornill right in their contention that **C** is simply the continuation of the other early document which we have termed **M**? There is undoubtedly much to be said for this view. Few readers would venture to say that such admirably conceived chapters as 1 Sam. xiv, xxii, xxv and xxvi are unworthy to be compared with the best chapters of **C**. And yet in other cases it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the incidents recorded reflect rather the plastic mould of popular tradition, and a greater distance from the events than we find in **C**. On the whole, therefore, it is better to leave the question open. In any case **M** is also a source of undoubted antiquity, and, equally with **C**, may confidently be assigned to the tenth century.

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[1] See Klostermann, *Die Bücher Samuelis und Könige*, p. xxii f., for the interesting suggestion that the author is no other than Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok who figures repeatedly in the story of Absalom's rebellion. Duhm, on the other hand, regards the family of Abiathar (see on 1 Sam. xxii. 20) as the source of these chapters, an alternative preferred by Budde to the other (see Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, p. 3).

Allusion has just been made to the view of Budde and Cornill that **M** and **C** (in large part **A** also) are one and the same document. This is perhaps the proper place for a reference to the literary theory of Samuel associated with the names of these eminent scholars. It is, in brief, that the contents of Samuel have been drawn in the main from two earlier historical works which practically cover the same ground, after the manner of the **J** and **E** narratives of the Pentateuch[1]. Indeed the scholars above named go so far as, if not absolutely to identify the sources of Samuel with the **J** and **E** sources of the Hexateuch, at least to maintain that they are the continuation of the latter[2] (roughly, Budde's **J**=our **A**, **M**, **C**; his **E**=our **S**, **D**, **T**).

(*d*) *The appendix*, *2 Sam. xxi–xxiv.* Of the six parts or sections of this appendix (for the contents, see page 6), the first and sixth, the story of the three years' famine and that of the three days' pestilence, are closely connected both in style and contents (see the notes on each). The incidents of both, moreover, must be assigned to the early part of David's reign, but for various reasons it is unlikely that they form part of either of our two earliest sources. In the commentary they are grouped among the other miscellaneous additions (**Z**), the question of their date being left undetermined.

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[1] The same view, practically, is advocated by **H. P.** Smith in his *Commentary on Samuel.* The two parallel sources he denotes by Sl and Sm. Budde has also secured the adherence of Driver in his *Introduction* and of Stenning in his article 'Samuel' in Hastings' *DB.* iv. 383 ff.

[2] This theory of the mutual relation of the various sources which the critical analysis has brought to light thus stands in somewhat sharp contrast to the position adopted in the foregoing pages, which in its essential features is that of Wellhausen, Kuenen, Stade, and Löhr. But not only Budde but also the other critics just named seem to the present writer to base a large part of their analysis from 1 Sam. xv onwards on a mistaken view of the relation between xvi. 14 ff. and xvii. 1 ff. In the former passage, it is asserted, David is a man of mature age and already a warrior of distinction, while in the latter he is but a shepherd-boy, fresh from his father's flocks. Consequently the two passages and their continuations must belong to different sources. It will be our endeavour in the notes (see especially pp. 119–122) to show on how insecure a foundation this supposed distinction rests, and that in what appears to us to be the original form of the text no such 'irreconcilable' difference is to be found. For the further question of the presence of **J** and **E** in Samuel see the unfavourable verdicts of Kittel (*Studien und Kritiken*, 1892, 61 ff.) and Smith (*Journ. of Bib. Literature*, xv (1896), 1 ff.

Between these two cognate sections there seems to have been driven, first of all, a wedge in the shape of a list of David's heroes with some achievements of the more celebrated. This list, in its turn, was rent in two by the further insertion of the much later poetical pieces (xxii and xxiii. 1–7). The two lists thus created, now found in xxi. 15–22 and xxiii. 8–39, are generally admitted to contain ancient and genuine historical material (see e. g. the note on xxi. 19). Inasmuch as the exploits recorded seem to belong almost exclusively to the period of David's early struggles with the Philistines, of which **M** has preserved a fragmentary record in 2 Sam. v. 17–25, it is highly probable that the lists in question stood originally in that early source (see further on 2 Sam. v. 17).

All that is necessary to be said on the subject of David's Thanksgiving Hymn and his 'Last Words' will be found in the notes.

V. THE DEUTERONOMIC EDITION OF SAMUEL[1].

It remains now to present a broad constructive view, omitting all details, of the process by which the Book of Samuel took shape at the hands of its Deuteronomic editor, as this may be inferred from the internal evidence of the book itself. Among the most precious of the literary treasures which the Exiles carried with them to their new homes 'by the rivers of Babylon' were two historical works dating from the first century of the monarchy (**C** and **M**), each of which had David for its theme. Or it may be that these had long since been joined together, if indeed they had not been one from the outset. The first-fruits of the new school of historians had already appeared. This was the first edition of Kings, giving the history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel from the accession of Solomon (see Skinner, *Kings*, 18 ff.), for which its editor had appropriated, as a suitable introduction, the original close of the court memoirs of David (1 Kings i–ii, from **C**). For a whole generation, if the date above suggested (p. 18) for 1 Sam. vii and xii be accepted, men were content, as well they might, with the history of the early monarchy as told by **M** and **C**. But towards the close of the Exile a Deuteronomic writer, imbued with the theocratic ideas of the time, worked up the still floating traditions of Samuel's age into a new treatise (our **D**) on the introduction of the monarchy, representing it as a breach of the divinely-ordained plan of a permanent theocracy for Israel[1].

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[1] Cf. what has been said under section iii of the aims and methods of this school.

This apology for the theocracy a redactor (**R**), dominated like all his school by a high religious purpose, set himself to work into the older history, prefixing the introductory sections (1 Sam. i–vi) from **S** and **A**[2]. But just as the Deuteronomic editor of Judges is understood to have omitted from his work such unsuitable or unedifying portions as Judges ix, xvi, and xvii–xxi[3], so our editor seems to have omitted from his edition 1 Sam. xxviii. 3 ff., and the whole of 2 Sam. ix–xx, as from the nature of their contents less suitable for the religious and moral edification of his readers. In place of the latter he substituted the summary of David's reign now appearing as ch. viii, with which his work concluded[1] (for the kindred sections, iii. 2–5, v. 13–16, see p. 5 and the note, p. 229). A briefer summary (1 Sam. xiv. 17–51), in the same way, took the place of a fuller record of Saul's campaigns which **M** may have once contained. In addition to such larger insertions as 1 Sam. ii. 27–36 and 2 Sam. vii, a number of smaller additions likewise betray the hand of the Deuteronomic editor, such as the brief chronological notices, 1 Sam. iv. 18, 2 Sam. v. 4 f. These minor additions have been pointed out in the notes.

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[1] For the contents and original order of **D** see above, p. 16 f., and below, p. 74.

[2] This, however, may have been already done.

[3] See the writer's *Joshua and Judges* (*Temple Bible*), p. xxii.

VI. THE POST-DEUTERONOMIC REDACTION AND LATER ADDITIONS.

The Book of Judges once more affords a parallel to the literary history of Samuel. There a later and more liberal editor restored the parts omitted by his predecessor and gave to the Book of Judges its present form. In the same way the precious court memoirs were restored, and the close of the new and enlarged Samuel indicated by the *repetition of the last verses of the Deuteronomic edition* (xx. 23–26 = viii. 16–18)[2]. The dates at which the appendix gradually took shape cannot be determined. This applies also to the various late insertions in the style of the Jewish Midrash (edifying expansions or alterations of the older text such as 1 Sam. xix. 18–24, xxi. 10–15), the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 1–10), and the other passages denoted throughout by **Z**. Latest of all must be put the extensive additions in 1 Sam. xvii and xviii which had not yet found a place in the Hebrew text that lay before the Greek translators *circa* 200 B. C.

Three stages, therefore, are distinctly traceable in the literary history of the canonical Book of Samuel—a pre-Deuteronomic stage, in which the sources circulated as independent documents, a Deuteronomic edition, prepared towards the close of the Exile, and the final or post-Deuteronomic edition, which for perhaps two centuries continued to receive minor additions to its contents[1].

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[1] This was first advanced and made probable by Budde.

[2] So Budde, whose theory of the two editions and their mutual relation is now generally accepted.

VII. THE TEXT OF SAMUEL AND THE VALUE OF THE GREEK VERSION.

The text of Samuel is considered by competent authorities to be the worst preserved in the O. T. with the possible exception of the text of Ezekiel. Nor is this surprising when one considers the great age of its main sources, and the popularity which they must have enjoyed, both while circulating as independent works and as combined into one whole. The more frequently a work is copied the more numerous the mistakes in the later copies are sure to be. Now, as our O. T. Revisers have reminded us in their preface, 'the Received, or, as it is commonly called, the Massoretic Text of the O. T. Scriptures, has come down to us in manuscripts which are of no very great antiquity, and which all belong to the same family or recension[2].' Indeed most modern Hebraists are of opinion that all existing MSS. of the O. T. have been derived from a single MS. of a date not earlier than the first or second century of our era. In these circumstances it is matter for congratulation that we have in the Greek Version of 'the Seventy' or Septuagint (LXX)[3] an independent witness to the text of Samuel as it circulated about the year 200 B. C. By its aid it has been found possible in almost every chapter of Samuel to restore, or at least improve, passages that are unintelligible or confused in the Hebrew, a fact of which illustrations in abundance will be found in the following pages. In this work of textual emendation, by the help of the LXX in particular, Thenius, Wellhausen, Klostermann, and Driver—the last named in his invaluable *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel*—have rendered conspicuous service.

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[1] Three similar stages may be traced for Joshua and Judges (see the *Temple Bible*, pp. ix ff., xix ff.).

[2] 'The earliest MS. of which the age is certainly known bears date A. D. 916' (Revisers' footnote).

[3] For the fullest information regarding the LXX and the principles which should regulate its use in the criticism of the Hebrew Text, see Swete's *Introduction to the O. T. in Greek*; Driver's *Notes*, xxxvi ff.; H. P. Smith, *Samuel*, 395 ff.

In several instances it can be shown from the LXX that the obscurity of the received text has arisen from what is technically known as *homoeoteleuton* (Gk. ὁμοιοτέλευτον). When a particular word or phrase stood in two consecutive lines, particularly if at or near the end, the eye of the copyist sometimes wandered from the one occurrence of the word to the other, omitting all that stood between. In this way one or even two lines have disappeared from the MSS. of the Massoretic text. Examples will be found in 1 Sam. x. 1, 21, xiv. 41 (a case of double *homoeoteleuton*), 2 Sam. xiii. 27, 34, and elsewhere[1]. The most interesting of all the textual problems raised by the divergent witness of the LXX in the Book of Samuel will be found stated and discussed in the notes on 1 Sam. xvii. 1—xviii. 5 (pp. 120 ff.).

The texts to which reference is most frequently made in the notes are those of the Codex Vaticanus, cited as LXX (B), as printed in Swete's standard edition of the Septuagint, and of Lucian's recension[2], cited as Lucian or as LXX (L), edited by Lagarde in his *Librorum Vet. Test. Pars Prior Graece* (1883).

VIII. THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

The historical value of the Book of Samuel, as of every other ancient historical work, must be measured by the age and trustworthiness of the sources from which its material is derived. In the case before us, it has been repeatedly shown that the oldest parts of Samuel are but little younger than the events they record. The court memoirs of David, in particular, have been subjected to the test of the most searching criticism and have emerged as a document of the first rank in the historical literature of antiquity. In both **C** and **M**, at least, the student of Hebrew history may rest assured that he possesses a trustworthy record of the early monarchy and of the circumstances that gave it birth. In the later prophetic biography of Samuel (**S**) we have also historical material, although not in so pure a form as in the older sources. Even as regards the theocratic sections, the student who has a true sense of the deeper significance of Israel's history will not fail to do justice to the philosophy of history which underlies them (cf. on 1 Sam. xii. 14).

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[1] It will be found, when the omitted lines are re-translated into Hebrew, that 'the roll of the book' from which the oldest Greek translation was made can be proved to have been written in columns, each line of which contained from 21-23 letters.

[2] For which see Swete's *Introduction*, pp. 81 ff.

In Samuel, further, the student has access to an incomparable gallery of historical portraits. One thinks, first of all, of David, whom a consummate literary artist has painted to the life. Where in the whole range of ancient literature is there a character whom we know as intimately as we know 'the darling of the songs of Israel' (2 Sam. xxiii. 1)? Here is a man alike distinguished in the arts of peace and of war, a man who knew, as scarcely another in history, the secret of winning the selfless devotion of his friends. While utterly loyal in his friendships, David extended to his personal enemies a forbearance all too rare in those early days. As in all great men, the elemental human passions were strong in the son of Jesse, and have left at least one dark stain on his memory. Nor can his culpable remissness as a parent be excused. Yet all this is forgotten in the recollection of the other and better David, who at every turn asked to know the will of Yahweh and strove to do it, and whose serene trust in his God even in the darkest hour is here for all to read.

How skilfully, again, does the artist portray the gradual deterioration in the character of the vain and ambitious Absalom! We still can see the scowl that rested on that fair but sullen face for 'two full years' as he waited for the hour of his revenge (2 Sam. xiii. 23, 32, emended text). And what shall we say of Saul the patriot and victim of a mind diseased, of the brave unselfish Jonathan, of the masterful Joab and the impulsive Abishai, of Hushai and Ahithophel, not to speak of the pious Hannah, the prudent Abigail, the devoted Rizpah, and the other immortal figures that pass before us? One's chief regret must ever be that the cross-lights of Hebrew tradition have made it difficult to fix the portrait of Samuel himself. But is not this variety of tradition itself a tribute to the greatness of the man and his life-work?

For the student of early Hebrew religion the Book of Samuel is of paramount importance. It is not too much to say that the study of this book has contributed more than anything else to the more accurate views of the historical development of religious thought in O. T. times, which are characteristic of the present day. The subject is too large for adequate treatment here. Only one or two outstanding points can be mentioned, and that briefly.

In the first place we see how firmly established in Israel was the central thought of the Mosaic teaching, that Yahweh was the God of Israel and Israel the people of Yahweh. So literally, indeed, is this belief reflected in our oldest sources, that David can conceive of no greater calamity than to be driven forth from the fellowship of Israel, 'the inheritance of Yahweh,' to 'serve other gods' (1 Sam. xxvi. 19). Beyond the limits of Canaan, Yahweh's land, other deities held sway, who claimed the allegiance and worship of all who dwelt within their territory. Between this primitive particularism and the attitude to the gods of the heathen reflected in 1 Sam. xii. 21 lie many centuries of the progress of revelation.

Similar primitive traits are discernible in the character of Yahweh, whose actions are often inscrutable and even arbitrary (see on 2 Sam. xxiv. 1). Yet the God of even our oldest sources is a God of justice and righteousness, the Guardian of morality (2 Sam. xi. 27 ff.) and the Avenger of a broken covenant (xxi. 1 ff.).

In this connexion one recalls the light which is thrown by the narratives of Samuel on such important adjuncts of worship as the Ark, the ephod-oracle of Urim and Thummim and the Teraphim. To these may be added, in the sphere of social life, the institution of the ban, the abstinence from blood, the war-taboos, and many more.

A mere reference must suffice for such subjects of surpassing importance for the study of the O. T. as the emergence for the first time into the light of history of the prophetic order (1 Sam. x. 5), the consecration of the site of the future temple, the illustrations of the Messianic Hope and of the ideas of the after-life among the shadows of Sheol, or even, it may be, a hint of a future resurrection (see on 1 Sam. ii. 6)[1].

IX. THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE BOOK.

Samuel differs in a marked degree from Judges and Kings in the absence of a regular chronological scheme. It is evident, however, that the period covered by the book is practically equivalent to the long life of Samuel (cf. 1 Sam. xxviii. 14), with David's reign of forty years in addition, in all rather more than a hundred years. This is confirmed by the repeated references to the descendants of Eli, of whom we can trace no fewer than five generations, ending with the youthful Jonathan, the son of Abiathar (1 Sam. xiv. 3, xxii. 18, 2 Sam. xv. 27).[2]

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[1] See the Index for references to the foregoing.

[2] This argument that five generations represent a period of over a century is based on the fact that, in the 350 years from Rehoboam to the Exile, seventeen monarchs in direct descent

For the later part of this period we have the trustworthy editorial note, 2 Sam. v. 4 f. (which see), and several invaluable data in 2 Sam. xiii ff. Assuming that Solomon reigned from 970 B. C. (cf. Skinner's tables in his *Kings*), David ascended the throne of Judah in 1010, and that of all Israel 1003-02. Since Amnon and Absalom, both born before 1003 (see 2 Sam. iii. 2), are grown up in ch. xiii, we may place the episode of this chapter *circa* 985. Between this point and Absalom's rebellion eleven years elapsed (xiii. 23, 38, xiv. 28, xv. 27 marg.), bringing us down to *circa* 974. In the following four years will fall the incidents of the Great Rebellion, Sheba's abortive insurrection (ch. xx), and the events of 1 Kings i, a period of time by no means too large (note the change in David, 1 Kings i. 1).

As regards the reign of Saul we are less fortunate. The chronological scheme in 1 Sam. xiii. 1 has unfortunately been left a blank (see p. 96). Since the estimate of David's forty years' reign (2 Sam v. 4 f.) has just proved itself correct[1], the accompanying statement that he was thirty years of age at his accession must also be accepted. Now if we assume that Jonathan was approximately of the same age—he must have been, by a few years, the elder of the two—and bear in mind that he was at least from eighteen to twenty years of age at the beginning of his father's reign (1 Sam. xiii. 2), we are compelled to limit that reign to some fifteen years at most, from ± 1025-1010[2].

For the preceding period the materials for a trustworthy estimate are entirely wanting (see on iii. 1, iv. 15, 18, vii. 2). It can only be said that the birth of Samuel must fall somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1080-75 B. C.

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occupied the throne of Judah (*c.* 933-586). This gives 21 years as the average age of the father at the birth of his eldest son.

[1] Kautzsch (*Literature of the O. T.*, 172 ff.), followed by Driver (article 'Chronology (Biblical),' *Encycl. Brit.*^{10}, xxvii. 10), allows David a reign of only 30 years (*c.* 1000-970), but this the data above given clearly prove to be some years too short.

[2] Contrast the forty years of Acts xiii. 21, and Josephus *Antiq.* vi. 14. 9, a period, for many reasons, much too long.

Notation of the Sources and Abbreviations of the Titles of Works frequently cited.

C The Memoirs of David's *C*ourt (see pp. 20 ff.).

M The History of the Introduction of the *M*onarchy and of Saul and David to the establishment of Jerusalem as the civil and religious centre of the kingdom (pp. 16 ff.).

A A fragment of a History of the *A*rk, or, it may be, of the Philistine oppression (p. 18). These three may well date from the latter half of the tenth century B. C.—**C** from *circa* 950 B. C., **M**, *c.* 920—if they did not originally form parts of a single work (in this case 1 Sam. xxvii. 6^b will be a later gloss).

S A Biography of *S*amuel the Prophet, pre-Deuteronomic (i. e. before 620), but perhaps not earlier than 630 (see p. 18 and the ref. there).

T Various *T*raditional elements, mostly variants of incidents recorded in **M** (p. 20).

D Various contributions from writers of the *D*euteronomic school (sect. iii), notably the apology for the theocracy (1 Sam. vii ff.), from the latter half of the Exile (pp. 16 ff., 24 f.).

? 1 Sam. xiii. 7^b–15^a (see p. 98), a passage of uncertain affinities and date.

Z A symbol for passages of the most various origins and dates, which there is reason to believe formed no part of the first edition of Samuel (pp. 19, 23, 25).

R denotes the hand of a Compiler or *R*edactor (pp. 19, 24 ff.).

DB. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

EBi. Cheyne and Black's *Encyclopaedia Biblica.*

BDB. Hebrew and English Lexicon, edited by Brown, Driver and Briggs.

LOT^6. Driver's *Introduction*, 6th edition (see p. 326).

OTJC^2. and *Rel. Sem*^{2}. W. Robertson Smith's *Old Test. in the Jewish Church* and *Religion of the Semites,* 2nd editions.

KAT^3. *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, 3rd edition (edited by Winckler and Zimmern).

PEFQSt. The Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statements.

LXX (*B*), *LXX* (*L*), the Vatican Codex and Lucian's recension of the Septuagint (see p. 27).

M. T. The Massoretic or Received Hebrew Text (see p. 26).

THE BOOK OF SAMUEL

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

NOTATION OF THE SOURCES AND ABBREVIATIONS OF THE TITLES OF WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED.

C The Memoirs of David's Court (see pp. 20 ff.).

M The History of the Introduction of the *Monarchy* and of Saul and David to the establishment of Jerusalem as the civil and religious centre of the kingdom (pp. 18 ff.).

A A fragment of a History of the Ark, or, it may be, of the Philistine oppression (p. 18). These three may well date from the latter half of the tenth century B.C.—C from *circa* 950 B.C., M c. 900—if they did not originally form parts of a single work (in this case 1 Sam. xxvii. [illegible] will be a later gloss).

S A Biography of Samuel the Prophet, pre-Deuteronomic (i.e. before 621), but perhaps not earlier than 650 (see [illegible]).

T Various *traditional* elements, mostly variants of incidents recorded in M (p. 20).

D Various contributions from writers of the *Deuteronomic* school [illegible] (1 Sam. xii ff.), from the latter half of the Exile (pp. 16 ff., 25 f.).

P 1 Sam. xiii. 7^b–15^a (see p. 98), a passage of uncertain affinities and date.

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DB. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

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BDB. *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, edited by Brown, Driver and Briggs.

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PEFQSt. *The Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statements.*

LXX (B), *LXX (L)*, the Vatican Codex and Lucian's recension of the Septuagint (see p. 4).

M. T. The Massoretic or Received Hebrew Text (see p. [illegible]).

THE
FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

[S] Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim- 1
zophim, of the hill country of Ephraim, and his name

First Division. 1 SAMUEL I—XIV.

SAMUEL AND SAUL.

A. i–vii. *The Early Life and Judgeship of Samuel.*

THE contents of the Books of Samuel fall into three parts or divisions, followed by an appendix (see the Introduction to this Commentary, section ii). The first of these parts or divisions, 1 Sam. i–xiv, comprises three subdivisions, the extent and contents of which have already been given. The first subdivision, embracing chapters i–vii, may, in its turn, be conveniently divided into three sections :—(*a*) i. 1–iv. 1^a, the birth, dedication, and call of Samuel ; (*b*) iv. 1^b–vii. 1, the invasion of the Philistines, followed by the capture and return of the Ark ; (*c*) vii. 2–17, Samuel, as judge, delivers Israel from the Philistines.

(*a*) **i. 1–iv. 1^a.** ***The birth, dedication, and call of Samuel.***

The prayer of Hannah, the childless wife of Elkanah, for a son is answered. He is named Samuel, and while still a child is dedicated to the service of Yahweh, and placed in charge of Eli, the chief priest of the sanctuary at Shiloh. When on the verge of adolescence Samuel receives the Divine call to the prophetic office. As later additions (see below) to this idyllic narrative are included the Song of Hannah (ii. 1–10) and the first announcement by an anonymous prophet of the impending fate of Eli and his house (ii. 27–36).

1. Ramathaim-zophim: as a place-name this form is indefensible. Elsewhere the name of Samuel's birthplace and later home is Ramah (i. 19, ii. 11, &c.). We must therefore read either : 'a certain man of Ramah, a Zuphite,' or 'a certain man of the Ramathites, a Zuphite.' That Ramah lay in 'the land of Zuph' is evident from ix. 5. Samuel is here clearly an Ephraimite by descent. Later genealogists, for dogmatic reasons, made him a member of the tribe of Levi (1 Chron. vi. 33–35 ; cf. 26–28). The situation of Ramah—*lit.* 'the high (place)'—is uncertain.

was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the
2 son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite: and he
had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and
the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had
3 children, but Hannah had no children. And this man
went up out of his city from year to year to worship and
to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. And the

By most recent authorities it is identified with the modern *Beit Rima*, which lies on a hill about thirteen miles north-east of Lydda, and twelve miles west of *Seilun*, the ancient Shiloh. In this case Ramah will have lain near the western edge of the central highlands of Palestine, which are termed in the O.T. 'the hill country of Ephraim.'

2. For a well-to-do citizen to have two wives of equal status was evidently not uncommon in early times (cf. Gen. xxix. 28 ff., and especially the law of Deut. xxi. 15 ff.), more particularly if the first was childless. The incidents here recorded (verses 6 ff.) were only too often paralleled, we may be sure, in other households.

Hannah . . . Peninnah: the former signifies Grace, the latter Coral, less probably Pearl.

3. the LORD of hosts: this, the most majestic of the Divine titles, and here first met with in the canonical books, is specially frequent in the prophetical writings of the O.T.—not, however, in all—and occurs eleven times in the Books of Samuel. In A.V. and R.V. Lord in small capitals is used to represent the personal name of the covenant God of Israel. Owing on the one hand to Hebrew having been originally written with consonants only, and on the other to the fact that in the post-exilic period the Jews, from motives of reverence, ceased to pronounce the 'ineffable name,' the original pronunciation of the latter has been lost. Wherever it occured, with certain exceptions, they substituted the word *Adonai*, Lord. Influenced by the same motives, the Greek translators (*c.* 250 B.C.) set the example of inserting the rendering of Adonai, viz. *Kurios*, hence the Latin *Dominus*, and the English Lord. The consonants of the tetragrammaton (four-letter word), as it is called, may be represented by YHWH (otherwise IHVH), which a variety of evidence leads us to conclude was pronounced YaHWeH. The familiar pronunciation Jehovah (I*e*H*o*V*a*H), which is not older than the sixteenth century, is due to an unfortunate attempt to combine the original consonants with the vowels of Adonai. As to the signification of Yahweh, modern scholars are mostly divided between 'He that two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests unto the

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is,' i.e. 'the self-existent One' (see Exod. iii. 14), and 'He that causes to be,' the Life-giver, Creator.

With regard to the original meaning of the compound title, 'LORD of hosts' or armies, in Heb. *Yahweh Ṣĕbā'ōth*—admittedly a contraction of the fuller 'Yahweh, the God of hosts' (Amos vi. 14; Hos. xii. 5)—a similar divergence of opinion still prevails. Most probably this title had its origin in the association of Yahweh with the early conquests of His people, by whom Yahweh was regarded as peculiarly a God of war (note especially 1 Sam. xvii. 45, where Yahweh Ṣebaoth is defined as 'the God of the armies of Israel,' and cf. Num. xxi. 14, 'the book of the wars of Yahweh'). Those who advocate this view also point to the frequent association, in the Books of Samuel especially (1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2, &c.), of this title with the sacred Ark, which in early times often—originally, perhaps, on all occasions—accompanied the armies of Israel to battle (cf. the early passages Num. x. 35 f.; Josh. vi. 4 f.; 1 Sam. iv. 3 ff.; 2 Sam. xi. 11).

In later and more peaceful times the title would suggest rather the hosts or armies of heaven, both angels and stars; and even if the explanation just given be regarded as giving the historical genesis of the title, it must be admitted that the reference to the hosts of heaven, which some authorities regard as the earlier and original, is that which dominates the prophetic usage of the title. Even in the earliest of the prophets, Amos and Hosea, Yahweh Ṣebaoth has become practically a proper name, denoting Yahweh as the supreme controller of the spiritual and material forces of the universe, a signification aptly brought out by one of the Greek renderings of the title, *Kurios Pantokratōr*, 'the Lord All-sovereign.' In the N. T. it occurs in the form *Kurios Sabaōth*, E. VV., 'the Lord of Sabaoth,' Rom. ix. 29 (a quotation from the LXX), Jas. v. 4. See further *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (*EBi.*), article, 'Names,' § 123; Driver in Hastings' *Dicty. of the Bible* (*DB.*), iii. 137 f.; and Kautzsch, *ibid.*, extra volume, 636 ff.

Shiloh: now *Seilun*, about nine and a half miles north-east of *Beitin* the ancient Beth-el (see Judges xxi. 19). At this period Shiloh derived its importance as the principal sanctuary of Central Palestine, at least, from the presence of the Ark, which was housed, as shown in the sequel, not in a tent or tabernacle, but in a substantial structure, here called a 'temple' (i. 9, iii. 3), the 'house of Yahweh' (i. 7, 24), with doors (iii. 15) and door-posts (i. 9). This sanctuary appears to have been destroyed by the Philistines after their victory (iv. 10 f.), as the successors of Eli in the priesthood are found later at Nob (xxi. 1 ff.; cf. also Jer. vii. 12). The representation of the later priestly historians that the gorgeous tabernacle of the Priests' Code (Exod. xxv ff.)

4 LORD, were there. And when the day came that
Elkanah sacrificed, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to
5 all her sons and her daughters, portions: but unto
Hannah he gave a double portion: for he loved Hannah,
6 but the LORD had shut up her womb. And her rival
provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the
7 LORD had shut up her womb. And *as* he did so year
by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD,
so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not
8 eat. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Hannah,
why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why

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was set up at Shiloh (see note on ii. 22), and afterwards removed to Gibeon (2 Chron. i. 3), is now regarded as unhistorical.

The occasion of Elkanah's yearly visit was doubtless the great autumn festival known as 'the Feast of Ingathering,' and later as 'the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles),' the feast or pilgrimage *par excellence* (1 Kings viii. 2), which was held 'at the turn of the year' (Exod. xxxiv. 22), i. e. after the grape and olive harvests had been gathered in and the cycle of the year's agricultural operations completed (cf. v. 20, and Judges xxi. 19–22).

In 3^b we expect: 'Eli and his two sons' (so LXX).

4-7. The main statement in these verses runs thus: 'And it fell on a day when Elkanah sacrificed (4^a) . . . that she (Hannah) wept and did not eat (7^b).' The intervening sentences form a long parenthesis describing what had regularly taken place in former years. According to early Hebrew custom, after Yahweh's portion had been burned on the altar (ii. 15 f.) and the priests had received their share, the worshippers, if of one family, used the flesh of the victim to provide a family meal within the sanctuary precincts, or a whole village community might similarly unite in the sacrificial meal (ix. 12 ff.). On the presence of women on such occasions, see Peritz, 'Woman in the Ancient Hebrew Cult,' *Journ. of Bibl. Lit.* xvii. (1898) 111 ff.

5. a double portion: a token of special honour and affection (cf. Benjamin's fivefold portion, Gen. xliii. 34), A. V. 'a worthy portion,' but the Hebrew text will not bear either meaning. A slight change of text (see R. V. marg.) gives: 'To Hannah he was wont to give a single portion; howbeit he loved Hannah, although Yahweh had,' &c.

7. Render with change of one letter: 'And so she (Peninnah) did year by year.'

is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons? So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in 9 Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon his seat by the door post of the temple of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed 10 unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, 11 and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. And it came to pass, as she 12 continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her 13 lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli

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9ᵃ. Read, as suggested by the LXX: 'So Hannah rose up after they had eaten, and presented herself before Yahweh' (for the expression, see x. 19; Joshua xxiv. 1). She goes to cast her heavy burden upon the Lord and to seek solace in prayer. 'The most general, the most constant, and therefore the most important element in worship is prayer' (Tiele, Gifford Lectures, ii. 133), frequently in the O. T. associated, as here, with a preceding sacrifice. Of the favourite attitudes in prayer, standing (Gen. xviii. 22; 1 Kings viii. 22, &c.; cf. Matt. vi. 5; Luke xviii. 11), kneeling (1 Kings viii. 54; Dan. vi. 10; Luke xxii. 41), and the characteristic oriental attitude of prostration (Gen. xxiv. 26; 1 Kings xviii. 42; Neh. viii. 6), Hannah chose the first, standing (verse 26) with her face towards the sacred Ark, the visible symbol of the presence of Yahweh. So David in his distress went into the tent which he had prepared for the Ark (see note on 2 Sam. vii. 18), and Daniel, at a later time, turned towards Jerusalem and its temple (Dan. vi. 10; cf. 1 Kings viii. 38). From verse 13 below we must infer that it was customary at this period to pray aloud.

11. Like Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 20 ff.) and Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 8), Hannah combines a vow with her prayer. It has been too hastily assumed that the child was to be a Nazirite or devotee from his birth in the sense of Num. vi, which belongs to the later legislation.

13. That these sacrificial feasts were often accompanied by excess is plain from Isa. xxviii. 7; cf. Amos ii. 8.

14 thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her,
How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine
15 from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my
lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk
neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul
16 before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a
daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my
complaint and my provocation have I spoken hitherto.
17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God
of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him.
18 And she said, Let thy servant find grace in thy sight.
So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her
19 countenance was no more *sad*. And they rose up in
the morning early, and worshipped before the Lord, and
returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and
Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the Lord re-
20 membered her. And it came to pass, when the time
was come about, that Hannah conceived, and bare
a son; and she called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because

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16. a daughter of Belial: a disreputable woman (cf. R.V. marg.); only here, but 'sons of Belial' and 'men of Belial' are frequently used in the historical books for 'disreputable characters' such as the sons of Eli (ii. 12). The etymology underlying the supposed meaning, 'worthlessness' (R.V. marg.), is not free from difficulty. In the O.T. Belial is never a proper name, but in post-biblical Jewish literature it often occurs as a name for Satan (so 2 Cor. vi. 15). See further *EBi.* i. col. 525 ff.

19. remembered her: implying that she conceived (so expressly LXX here; cf. Gen. xxx. 22 f. of Rachel). The mention of her conception in the next verse is due to a copyist's slip.

20. Render: 'And it came to pass at the turn of the year that she bore a son.' The date intended is the autumn or fall, shortly before the return of the Feast of Ingathering (see note on verse 3).

Samuel: in Heb. *Shĕmû'ēl*, here associated by the historian with the verb *shā̆'al*, to ask, by which he 'means to express (as often in the O.T.) an assonance, not an etymology' (Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel*, in loc.). Of the numerous attempts at a more scientific etymology, the two most plausible agree in

I have asked him of the LORD. And the man Elkanah, 21
and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the
yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; 22
for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the
child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may
appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. And 23
Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth
thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the
LORD establish his word. So the woman tarried and
gave her son suck, until she weaned him. And when 24
she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with
three bullocks, and one ephah of meal, and a bottle of
wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in

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connecting the first part of the word with the Semitic root for 'name.' Thus many scholars take *Shemuel* to mean 'Name of God,' with which they compare names like Penuel ('face of God'), Reuel, &c. More recently it has been suggested, on the analogy of some early Babylonian and South Arabian names, that the first element denotes 'His name' as a periphrasis for Yahweh—'His name is God' = 'Yahweh is God.' Samuel would thus be identical in meaning with the name Joel (see Hommel, *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, 100, and index under Samuel).

21. A full year has now elapsed since the events of the earlier part of the chapter.

23. his word: read with LXX 'thy word,' meaning 'may Yahweh permit thee to carry out thy intention,' as expressed in verse 22^b.

24. The child's age at this point is not stated. Hebrew mothers usually nursed their children for two to three years (2 Macc. vii. 27), but a period of five to six years is not unknown in Palestine at the present time. The longer period is suggested here by the fact that Samuel was able from the first to minister at Shiloh (ii. 11).

three bullocks. The ancient law required that at the redemption of the firstborn none should appear 'before Yahweh empty' (Exod. xxxiv. 20), but the first part of Hannah's offering in the Hebrew text is not only out of proportion to the rest, but is inconsistent with verse 25^a; read therefore, by dividing the words differently, 'with a bullock of three years old' (see R. V. marg.).

An **ephah** was about equal to an imperial bushel (see the

25 Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew the
26 bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said,
Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman
27 that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For
this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my
28 petition which I asked of him: therefore I also have
granted him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he is
granted to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD
there.

2 [Z] And Hannah prayed, and said:
My heart exulteth in the LORD,

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writer's article 'Weights and Measures,' Hastings' *DB.* iv. 912), and was of the same capacity as the corresponding 'bath' for liquids. The last clause of the verse is corrupt.

25. Since it is stated so circumstantially in the narrative that Hannah alone went up to Shiloh with her child — Elkanah appearing only in ii. 11, where the name is a later intrusion, unsupported by the LXX—we should render: 'And after they (the temple officials) had slain the bullock, the mother of the child (so LXX with change of one letter) came to Eli, and said,' &c.

28. Samuel is solemnly **granted**, i. e. dedicated to the lifelong service of the LORD. The last clause must be taken in connexion with ii. 11, and the original text may be thus restored with the help of the LXX: 'And she left him there before Yahweh, and went to Ramah to her house. And the child continued to minister unto Yahweh before Eli the priest.' The insertion of the song by a later editor (see below) led to the disruption of the original context. With the position of Samuel as Eli's *famulus* compare Joshua's relation to Moses at the Tent of Meeting (Exod. xxxiii. 11).

ii. 1–10. Hannah's prayer is really a psalm (cf. Ps. lxxii. 20, 'the prayers of David'). The reference to the king in verse 10 —no matter whether an actual or an ideal sovereign is intended— alone shows that this beautiful sacred lyric cannot have been sung by Hannah in the circumstances described. To Hannah's special circumstances, indeed, there is no *explicit* reference whatever. The words of 5^c alone approach her situation, and doubtless led to the insertion of the psalm in its present context; scarcely, however, by the original compiler of Samuel (see Introduction), but by a later hand. The original, which has suffered in some places in the course of transmission, consists of

Mine horn is exalted in the LORD:
My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;
Because I rejoice in thy salvation.
There is none holy as the LORD; 2
For there is none beside thee:
Neither is there any rock like our God.
Talk no more so exceeding proudly; 3
Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth:
For the LORD is a God of knowledge,
And by him actions are weighed.
The bows of the mighty men are broken, 4
And they that stumbled are girded with strength.

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a number of distichs, or short double lines, each marked by the parallelism of thought and expression which is characteristic of Hebrew poetry. The Magnificat (Luke i. 46–55) is largely modelled on the Song of Hannah. The main theme of the Song is the sovereignty of God as the supreme disposer of the destinies of men (verses 4–8), which is preceded by a note of jubilant praise (1 f.) and a note of warning (3), and followed by a reference to the Messianic future (9 f.).

1. mine horn is exalted (cf. verse 10^{d}): a familiar figure, drawn from animal life, for abounding vitality and somewhat self-conscious strength. The widening of the **mouth** was a gesture of contempt (Ps. xxxv. 21; Isa. lvii. 4).

2. The original distich is probably to be restored by omitting the second line of our text, which interrupts the parallelism. The figurative designation of God as a **rock,** that is, as the steadfast support and refuge of His people, is frequent in Hebrew poetry (2 Sam. xxii. 3, 47, xxiii. 3; Deut. xxxii. 4, &c., and often in Pss.).

3. by him (to be preferred to R.V. marg.) **actions are weighed:** with this figure of the balance as the means of testing human worth (so Prov. xvi. 2; Dan. v. 27) we may compare the familiar illustration from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, representing the heart of the deceased in one scale being weighed against the symbol of Truth and Right in the other before being admitted to the realm of Osiris. The test to which the Hebrew poet refers, however, is applied in this life, and the changes in the fortunes of men and women adduced in the following verses are to be regarded as the ensuing rewards and punishments, and not as due to the caprice of an arbitrary sovereign.

5 They that were full have hired out themselves for
bread ;
And they that were hungry have ceased :
Yea, the barren hath borne seven ;
And she that hath many children languisheth.
6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive :
He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.
7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich :
He bringeth low, he also lifteth up.
8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill,
To make them sit with princes,
And inherit the throne of glory :
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's,
And he hath set the world upon them.
9 He will keep the feet of his holy ones,

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5. have ceased (to be hungry) : better with R.V. marg., 'have rest' from toil. The rest of the verse seems to be an expansion of Jer. xv. 9^{a}. **seven** here has the sense of 'a numerous family' ; note the parallelism.

6. the grave : Heb. *shě'ōl,* corresponding to the Greek *Hades,* the abode of departed spirits, good and bad alike. It was thought of as lying beneath the earth, where the so-called 'shades' passed a shadowy existence, scarcely worthy to be called life. In the A.V. Sheol is variously rendered by 'the grave,' 'hell,' and sometimes 'the pit' ; for these the R.V. has substituted 'Sheol' in about half the passages (e.g. 2 Sam. xxii. 6 for 'hell,' which with its modern associations is a peculiarly unhappy rendering). In the light of the parallelism in 6^{a} it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in 6^{b} the poet declares his belief in a resurrection from the dead. If this be so, the date of the poem must be sought well on in the post-exilic period (cf. Isa. xxvi. 19 ; Dan. xii. 1 ff.). By most commentators, however, Sheol is here understood as a figurative expression for the extreme of distress and peril, as in Ps. lxxxvi. 13.

8. Cf. the parallel Ps. cxiii. 7 ff. The terms used are not to be explained as mere oriental figures (see W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 2nd ed., 235 n. 1).

In verses 9 f. the poet turns from the present to the future ; the

But the wicked shall be put to silence in darkness;
For by strength shall no man prevail.
They that strive with the LORD shall be broken to pieces; 10
Against them shall he thunder in heaven:
The LORD shall judge the ends of the earth;
And he shall give strength unto his king,
And exalt the horn of his anointed.

[S] And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And 11
the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.
Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew 12
not the LORD. And the custom of the priests with the 13
people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the
priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething,

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destruction of the wicked, the preservation of the pious Israelites—the 'holy' or 'godly ones' of verse 9—and the judgement of the world preceding the advent of the Messiah are all characteristic features of the later Jewish eschatology. Verse 10^{b} should probably read, with a slight change: 'The Most High in heaven shall shatter them' (cf. Ps. ii. 9), which improves the parallelism.

And he shall give strength: rather 'in order to give . . . and to exalt,' &c., both being final clauses.

his king . . . his anointed: these terms are best taken as referring to the Messianic King, the same who is the theme of the second Psalm. For the origin and significance of the expression 'Yahweh's anointed,' see on x. 1.

11. The original close of the narrative of ch. i (see on i. 28 above).

ii. 12–17. *The misconduct of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas.*

12. sons of Belial: see on i. 16.

they knew not the LORD: 'did not acknowledge the LORD' more nearly reproduces the thought of the original; Eli's sons lived in open disregard of God's moral requirements. Cf. Hos. iv. 1, 6, where 'the knowledge of God' is synonymous with obedience to His moral law. We have here the O.T. parallel to the faith which 'if it hath not works is dead' (Jas. ii. 17 ff.).

13–16. In these verses the historian explains the irregularities of which 'the young men' (verse 17) were guilty. With the margin, however, we should join the first part of verse 13 to verse 12, and read: 'they regarded neither Yahweh nor what was due

14 with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; and he
struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all
that the fleshhook brought up the priest took therewith.
So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came
15 thither. Yea, before they burnt the fat, the priest's
servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give
flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden
16 flesh of thee, but raw. And if the man said unto him,
They will surely burn the fat presently, and then take
as much as thy soul desireth; then he would say, Nay,
but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it
17 by force. And the sin of the young men was very great
before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the
LORD.

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to the priest from the people.' At this early period the priests' dues were not yet a matter of written prescription (see Deut. xviii. 3 for a later period), but were apparently left to the free will of the worshipper. The sons of Eli were not satisfied with this arrangement, but 'whenever a man offered a sacrifice' they sent a servant with the demand of the text. In this way they sinned against the use and wont of the sanctuary of Shiloh.

14. the priest took therewith: read with the Versions and R.V. marg.: 'took for himself.'

15 f. record a serious aggravation of the breach of hallowed custom just mentioned. Hophni and Phinehas were guilty not only of high-handed conduct towards the worshippers, but of sacrilege, in that they were wont to demand their share of the sacrificial flesh before Yahweh had received His portion by the burning of the fat upon the altar. This, next to the solemn shedding of the blood of the victim at the foot of the altar, was of the essence of the rite.

16. presently: better, as margin, 'first' (let them burn the fat). Only after the blood and the fat had been duly offered could priest and worshipper partake of the sacrificial meal that followed (cf. i. 4 ff.).

17. for men abhorred the offering of the LORD: grammatical usage requires us to render as in the margin: 'for the men (i. e. the sons of Eli) despised, showed contempt for, the LORD's offering.' Probably, however, the original was simply 'for they despised,' &c. (so LXX).

But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, 18
girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made 19
him a little robe, and brought it to him from year to
year, when she came up with her husband to offer the
yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, 20
and said, The Lord give thee seed of this woman for
the loan which was lent to the Lord. And they went
unto their own home. And the Lord visited Hannah, 21
and she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters.
And the child Samuel grew before the Lord.

Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons 22
did unto all Israel, and how that they lay with the women

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ii. 18–21. *Samuel the boy-priest.* This charming picture of Samuel in the serene innocence of childhood, clothed in priestly dress and the object of a pious mother's care, is skilfully introduced between 12–17 and 22–25 in order to heighten the contrast between him and the unworthy sons of Eli, who, scorning all parental restraint, had brought the priestly office into contempt.

18. girded with a linen ephod (Heb. *'ēphōd bad*): so David when he danced before the Ark (2 Sam. vi. 14). From the sequel to the latter incident (*ibid.* 20 ff.) we learn that the 'linen ephod' must have been a short skirt girt about the waist, and a distinctive part of the priests' dress. It was as a boy-priest that Samuel 'ministered before the Lord.' Elsewhere in the Books of Samuel, with one apparent exception, where our versions speak of 'wearing an (*or* the) ephod,' an entirely different object is intended. See note on verse 28 below, and for the exception referred to see on xxii. 18.

20. The LORD give thee seed, &c.: the text is difficult and doubtless corrupt. We should probably read: 'The Lord repay thee with offspring (*or* seed) from this woman, in return for the loan which she hath lent to the Lord.' The terms 'loan' and 'lend' are used with reference to i. 28.

ii. 22–26. *Eli makes an ineffectual attempt to restrain his sons.*

22 f. The original text seems to have run thus: 'Now Eli was very old, and when he heard all . . . Israel, he said unto them,' &c. The second half of verse 22, which is wanting in the LXX (B), is rejected by all modern critics as an interpolation from Exod. xxxviii. 8, with a view to heighten the iniquity of the priests. The introduction here of 'the tent of meeting' is altogether

23 that did service at the door of the tent of meeting. And
he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I heai
24 of your evil dealings from all this people. Nay, my sons;
for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD's
25 people to transgress. If one man sin against another,
God shall judge him: but if a man sin against the
LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they
hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the
26 LORD would slay them. And the child Samuel grew on,
and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

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at variance with the picture of the temple of Shiloh in ch. i (see note on Shiloh, i. 3).

23 f. Read: 'Why do ye these things that I hear from all the people; nay, my sons, for evil (*lit.* 'not good') is the report which I hear the LORD's people do spread abroad' (see marg.). For the text here, see Driver, *Notes* in loc.

25. God shall judge him: rather, 'doth act as arbiter.' In cases of wrongdoing between man and man, God arbitrates or mediates between them, either through His representative, the judge (cf. marg.), or through an oracle, or otherwise; but in the case of sins directly affecting God, such as the sacrilege of Eli's sons, there is no third party to act as mediator. The sinner in consequence cannot hope to escape the punishment incurred.

26. Imitated by Luke in his description of the boyhood of Jesus (ii. 52).

ii. 27–36. *The doom of Eli's house foretold.* There is a consensus of opinion among scholars that this section in its present form is of later date than the main body of the narrative of chs. i–iii, and consequently from a different hand. The main arguments in favour of this view are (1) the absence of all reference to Samuel, who is the centre of interest in the main narrative; and (2) the acquaintance which the section betrays with the long subsequent history of the Israelite priesthood, down apparently to the reformation under Josiah (see below). It is not so clear whether the passage is entirely to be referred to a writer of the Deuteronomic school, or whether the latter has merely expanded a shorter passage of more general import by the original narrator. If iii. 12 is to be retained (see there), the latter is the more plausible view (cf. Driver, *LOT.*^{6}, 174). Unfortunately the text is in several places corrupt, and the exegesis in consequence uncertain.

[**D**] And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said 27
unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I reveal myself unto
the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt *in
bondage* to Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him 28
out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up
unto mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before
me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the

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27. a man of God: one of the oldest and most frequent designations of a prophet (as of Samuel himself, ix. 6 ff.), emphasizing the prophet's close connexion with God as His confidant (Amos iii. 7) and messenger. In the historical books anonymous prophets are, as a rule, characteristic of later passages, and in almost every case they are messengers of threatening and doom. The questions following (verses 27, 28) imply in each case an affirmative answer.

the house of thy father: the genealogy of Eli is nowhere given in the O. T. By the Chronicler, however, one of his descendants is described as 'of the sons of Ithamar' (1 Chron. xxiv. 3), the fourth son of Aaron. The name of Eli's son, Phinehas, is another link connecting him with the family of Aaron (see Exod. vi. 23, 25). The reference here is manifestly to the Divine choice of the tribe of Levi for the priestly office (cf. the parallel passage, Deut. xxxiii. 8-11).

28. Note here the threefold division of the priestly duties, with which should be compared another threefold division in Deut. x. 8 f.

to wear an ephod before me: in view of the fact that the verb (*nāsā*) here rendered 'to wear' is nowhere else found in the sense of wearing an article of dress, we must here, and in the other passages where the expression occurs, render 'to bear an ephod before me.' The precise nature of the ephod, of which mention is so frequently made in the Books of Samuel, is still undetermined. That it was an object made, in whole or in part, of precious metal (Judges viii. 27), that it stood free like an image or idol (1 Sam. xxi. 9), that it was carried on occasion by a priest (xiv. 3, xxiii. 6 'in his hand'), and that it was chiefly used in connexion with divination, especially for ascertaining the will of Yahweh by means of the sacred lot (xiv. 18, where see note; xxiii. 6, 9, xxx. 7, &c.), are conclusions now generally accepted by scholars. See the articles 'Ephod' in *DB*. i (Driver), and *EBi*. ii (Moore), and Kautzsch in Hastings' *DB*., extra vol. 641 f. The connexion between the ephod as an image or such like and the *ephod bad* or linen ephod of verse 18 is still matter of conjecture (see the authorities just cited).

29 offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in *my* habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest
30 of all the offerings of Israel my people? Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they
31 that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in
32 thine house. And thou shalt behold the affliction of *my* habitation, in all the wealth which *God* shall give

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all the offerings: for the priests' share in the various offerings as determined by the Deuteronomic and Priestly legislations, see Deut. xviii. 1 ff.; Num. xviii. 8 ff., and elsewhere. Contrast verses 13 ff. above (with note).

29. which I have commanded in my **habitation:** the text is here, by universal consent, admitted to be corrupt, and no convincing restoration has as yet been proposed. The plural pronouns show that Eli is involved in the iniquity of his sons, in that he shared with them the meat which they secured by sacrilegious means.

30. Yahweh revokes His intention with regard to the house of Eli, with whose descendants the highest offices of the priesthood would have remained had they proved themselves worthy of so great an honour.

and the house of thy father: these words, and the corresponding reference in verse 31, must be deleted as a mistaken addition, suggested by 27 ff. (so Löhr and others), since the doom about to be pronounced affects only the descendants of Eli; the honour of the priesthood is about to be transferred to another branch of the house of Levi (see on verse 35).

31 f. The text of these two verses is extremely uncertain, the best Greek version, LXX (B), omitting the latter half of verse 31 and the first half of 32. In particular, the words rendered 'the affliction of my habitation' are hopelessly corrupt. The general sense appears to be that the strength and vitality of the house of Eli, symbolized by the expression 'arm,' will be so undermined

Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house
for ever. And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut 33
off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to
grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house
shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be 34
the sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on
Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of
them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall 35
do according to that which is in mine heart and in my
mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall

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that no member thereof will ever reach old age. 'Premature death is a sign of the Divine displeasure' (H. P. Smith).

33. And the man of thine: i. e. of thy family, the reference being to Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech and great-grandson of Eli, who alone escaped from the massacre of the priests of Nob (xxii. 20). The whole may be rendered thus: 'Yet (one) man belonging to thee I will not cut off from mine altar, that he may consume his eyes and cause his soul (reading 'his' for 'thy,' with LXX) to pine away.' For the last expression see Lev. xxvi. 16 R. V. This reading brings out more clearly the reference to Abiathar's loss of his office, and banishment by Solomon. So, at least, the passage was understood by the author of 1 Kings ii. 27 (see Skinner's Commentary in this series).

in the flower of their age: a more than doubtful rendering of the text. The Greek reading, 'by the sword of men,' is generally preferred (see R. V. marg.).

34. The death of Eli's two sons in one day (iv. 11) is to be at once the beginning of the threatened doom and the earnest of all that is to follow.

35. The opening words might lead us to identify the 'faithful priest' with Samuel, but this identification is ruled out by the following clauses, which point unmistakably to Zadok, the future head and ancestor of the Jerusalem priesthood.

I will build him a sure house: that is, I will establish his descendants permanently in the priesthood, as explained in the following clause. 'House' as a figure for 'family,' descendants, is a common figure in the O.T. from Gen. xviii. 19 (Abraham) onwards; for 'building a house' in the modern sense of 'founding a family' see Deut. xxv. 9; Ruth iv. 11. The exact counterpart of this promise of the permanence of the Zadokite priesthood is the assurance of a similar permanency for the dynasty of David (2 Sam. vii. 11 ff., also from the pen of a Deuteronomic historian).

36 walk before mine anointed for ever. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread.

3 [S] And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD

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before mine anointed: see on x. 1 for the origin of this frequent designation of a Hebrew king. Here, however, and in 2 Sam. xxii. 51, the expression is used in a collective sense of the Davidic dynasty (see on xii. 3, where the various occurrences are cited).

36. Most moderns find in this verse a picture of the straits to which the priests of the local sanctuaries were reduced, when the latter were abolished by the reformation of Josiah. It seems to have been found impossible to carry out the injunctions of Deut. xviii. 6–8, which provided for the due support of the dispossessed priests (cf. 2 Kings xxiii. 8 f.) at the temple of Jerusalem, henceforth the sole legitimate sanctuary. On this view, which is that now generally adopted by O. T. scholars, we have a clear indication of the date of the section (ii. 27–36), as already noted. The intention of the writer to whom its present form is due is clearly betrayed in verses 33–36. He wishes by the expansion of an earlier prophecy to give Divine sanction to the supersession of the priestly family of Eli by Zadok and his descendants, a measure which in reality was carried through by Solomon on grounds of public policy. This, as has been already indicated, is the interpretation put upon it by the Deuteronomic author of 1 Kings ii. 27.

iii. 1–iv. 1ª. *The call of Samuel and second announcement of the fate of Eli's House.*

The boy-priest is called to a higher office as the prophet of Yahweh. In simple but graphic style the narrator tells the story of Samuel's first direct intercourse with God. In the end Samuel is found established as 'a prophet of the LORD,' and sought after as such throughout the length and breadth of the land.

1. the child Samuel: the term *na'ar* here applied to Samuel gives no indication of his age at this important crisis, since it is found applied to any age, from a new-born infant (iv. 21) to a man of forty (2 Chron. xiii. 7, cf. xii. 13). From the statement, ii. 21, however, we may infer that he had now reached the age of at

before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in
those days; there was no open vision. And it came to 2
pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place,
(now his eyes had begun to wax dim, that he could not
see,) and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and 3
Samuel was laid down *to sleep*, in the temple of the LORD,
where the ark of God was; that the LORD called Samuel: 4
and he said, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, 5
Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I
called not; lie down again. And he went and lay
down. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And 6
Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I;
for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not,
my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet 7
know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet
revealed unto him. And the LORD called Samuel again 8

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least thirteen to fifteen years (see on i. 24), an age at which a greater than he was already busy with 'the things of His Father' (Luke ii. 49).

the word of the LORD was precious: rather, as in the margin, 'rare,' a sense which the word has in Isa. xiii. 12 (R.V.), and which requires us to render the following clause: 'there was no frequent vision' (so R.V. marg.).

2 ff. The main statement runs: 'and it came to pass . . . that the LORD called Samuel' (verse 4), all between being explanatory details (cf. on i. 4–7).

3. the lamp of God was not yet gone out: the time indicated is towards morning; the lamp which burned in the temple during the hours of darkness was evidently supplied with oil sufficient for one night only. The custom, here vouched for, of the *ædituus* or temple guardian sleeping within the sanctuary has its parallel in the early notice of Joshua, Samuel's predecessor in the guardianship of the Ark, who 'departed not out of the Tent' of Meeting (Exod. xxxiii. 11). Eli apparently slept in an adjoining chamber.

4. The Greek text is here generally preferred, as more in keeping with the graphic character of the narrative: 'and it came to pass (verse 2) . . . that the LORD called, Samuel, Samuel.' Cf. verse 10, 'as at other times.' In verse 6, also, the LXX repeats the name.

the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said,
Here am I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived
9 that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said
unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call
thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant
heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.
10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other
times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for
11 thy servant heareth. And the LORD said to Samuel,
Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the
12 ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that
day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken
concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the
13 end. For I have told him that I will judge his house

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10. the LORD came, and stood: the Deity is now, for the first time, visible as well as audible. The whole passage is of importance for the writer's conception of the mode of revelation in early times.

iii. 11–14. *Announcement of the impending punishment of Eli and his house.* Render: 'Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel,' &c.; the Hebrew idiom emphasizes the fact that the punishment is on the eve of execution. The figure of the tingling ears is also found 2 Kings xxi. 12; Jer. xix. 3.

12. The reference is clearly to the contents of ii. 27–36. Those who hold the latter section to be entirely Deuteronomistic are obliged to regard this verse as a harmonistic addition (see above on ii. 27 ff.).

from the beginning even unto the end: *lit.* 'beginning and ending'; the Divine purpose with regard to Eli will be completely and thoroughly carried out.

13. For I have told him: the Massoretic pointing continues the backward reference to the message of the 'man of God,' but the object of the vision to Samuel is only made apparent, and the latter's fear (verse 15) fully justified, if we read with Klostermann and most others: 'and thou shalt tell him that I am about to judge (i.e. punish) his house for ever'; the Divine judgement is irrevocable. The text of the following clauses has been altered from religious motives, and is to be restored, following the LXX, somewhat as follows: 'because he knew that his sons were blaspheming God (see R.V. marg.), and he restrained them not.'

for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house 14
of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. And Samuel 15
lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my 16
son. And he said, Here am I. And he said, What is 17
the thing that *the LORD* hath spoken unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he spake unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, 18
and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good. And Samuel grew, 19
and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even 20
to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be

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17. God do so to thee, and more also: this form of oath is especially common in the Books of Samuel (xiv. 44; xx. 13; xxv. 22, &c.), although most frequently the punishment is invoked by the speaker upon himself, 'God do so to me,' &c. The formula is to be explained as 'an imprecation originally connected with the ceremony of slaying an animal at the taking of an oath. The parties pray that the fate of the victim may be theirs' (H. P. Smith).

18. Eli's pious resignation may be compared with David's in less distressful circumstances (2 Sam. xv. 26).

iii. 19–iv. 1ª. From this time onwards Samuel takes his place as the leader of the religious life of Israel. The reality of his call to be Yahweh's prophet was confirmed by the fact that Yahweh 'did let none of his words fall to the ground,' i. e. become ineffectual or unfulfilled.

20. from Dan (in the furthest north) **even to Beer-sheba** (in the extreme south): the oft-recurring expression for the whole extent of Canaan. From verse 20 to iv. 1 inclusive (see next section), the Greek text of Samuel differs considerably from the Hebrew. The latter, especially in iii. 21 and iv. 1ª, is clearly in

21 a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in
4 Shiloh by the word of the LORD. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

[A] Now Israel went out against the Philistines to

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some disorder, but it is scarcely possible now to determine the precise contents and order of the original.

(*b*) iv. 1^b-vii. 1. *An invasion of the Philistines is followed by the capture and subsequent return of the Ark.*

In their present connexion these three chapters form the historical continuation of chs. i-iii. That the two sections, however, are not from the same hand is now universally admitted by O. T. scholars, chiefly on the following grounds: (1) the centre of interest now shifts from the person of Samuel, *who is not once mentioned in* iv-vi, to the fortunes of the Ark; (2) the fate of the house of Eli, which the preceding narrative has led us to expect as the main subject of the chapters before us, proves to be but an incident in the story of a greater disaster; and (3) the religious standpoint of this section is much less advanced than that of the previous chapters. In particular, the ideas here associated with the Ark are of a more antique cast than those reflected in almost any other O. T. references thereto. For these and other reasons critics generally are agreed in detecting in this section one of the earliest strata in the Books of Samuel. The editor, however, has given us but an excerpt from a fuller narrative (see on iv. 1, vi. 1), which must originally have contained some account of the further success of the Philistine invasion, including the destruction of the sanctuary of Shiloh (see on xxi. 1) and the conquest of Central Palestine (see on xiii. 3, a Philistine resident in Geba). As it now stands we have (1) the defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines, involving the capture of the Ark of Yahweh and the subsequent death of Eli (ch. iv); (2) the fortunes of the Ark in the country of the Philistines, by which the superiority of Yahweh to the native deities is vindicated (v); and (3) the restoration of the Ark to Israelite territory (vi).

iv. 1-5. *A Philistine invasion and victory lead the Israelites to fetch the Ark of Yahweh from Shiloh.*

1. The fuller LXX text is to be preferred: 'And it came to pass in those days that the Philistines were gathered together to battle against Israel, and Israel went out against them to battle,' &c. This is the first mention in Samuel of these powerful enemies of Israel, who were destined to play so large a part in the establish-

battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines
pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves 2
in array against Israel: and when they joined battle,
Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew
of the army in the field about four thousand men. And 3
when the people were come into the camp, the elders of
Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day
before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the

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ment of the Hebrew monarchy. The Hebrews knew that the Philistines (*Pĕlishtîm*), like themselves, were foreign invaders, whose original home is given as Caphtor (Amos ix. 7; Jer. xlvii. 4, &c.). The older identification of Caphtor with the Delta of the Nile is now abandoned in favour of Crete or, on better grounds, the southern coast of Asia Minor. The *Pĕlishtîm* are undoubtedly the *Pulusati* of the Egyptian monuments, the leading tribe among a number that invaded Palestine by land and sea early in the reign of Ramses III, *circa* 1200 B.C. In the time of the Judges they are already in possession of the great maritime plain from Joppa southwards, the Philistia of the R.V. (so uniformly for Palestina of A.V.), a name which in its later Graeco-Latin form, Palestina, was extended to the whole country west of the Jordan. As a race of Aryan extraction, the Philistines did not practise the Semitic rite of circumcision, hence the opprobrious epithet 'the uncircumcised' so often applied to them by the Hebrews. Politically they formed a confederacy under the control of five 'lords,' whose seats of government were the cities of Ashdod, Ekron, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Gath. Owing largely to their superior political and military organization, they successfully contested, for at least a century, the hegemony of Central and Southern Palestine with the Israelites until their power was finally broken by David. According to 1 Sam. xiv. 52, 'there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul.' See further Moore's article 'Philistines' in *EBi.*, vol. iii.

Eben-ezer: 'stone of help,' is not to be identified off-hand with the Ebenezer of vii. 12 (which see), but must be placed in the neighbourhood of **Aphek**, which is probably located at some spot in the plain of Sharon commanding the entrance to the plain of Dothan, the natural line of march for an attack on Central Palestine.

2. in the field: in the open country where the Philistines could use their famous war-chariots (xiii. 5; 2 Sam. i. 6).

3. For the significance of the Ark and the fuller designations employed here and in verse 4, see note A in the Appendix.

covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that it may
come among us, and save us out of the hand of our
4 enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, and they
brought from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD
of hosts, which sitteth upon the cherubim: and the two
sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the
5 ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the
covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel
shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.
6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout,
they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in
the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that
7 the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. And the
Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into
the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath
8 not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who
shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods?
these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all
9 manner of plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and
quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not
servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you:

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4. Omit 'there' with LXX. The two sons of Eli accompany the Ark to the camp as its bearers (cf. 2 Sam. xv. 29).

iv. 6–11. *Consternation of the Philistines. Israel is again defeated, and the Ark captured.*

6. the Hebrews: the name by which the children of Israel were known to the surrounding nations (xiv. 11; xxix. 3). 6^b should be taken along with verse 7: 'and when they understood . . . the Philistines were afraid,' &c.

7. God (*Elohim*) **is come:** Hebrew writers carefully avoid putting the sacred name Yahweh into the mouth of a non-Israelite. But such an unqualified confession is strange in the present connexion, and we should read, as suggested by LXX (B): 'these are their gods (cf. 8 f.), they have come to them to the camp.'

8. in the wilderness: either an excusable inaccuracy, or a copyist's slip for the word signifying 'and with pestilence' (Wellhausen).

quit yourselves like men, and fight. And the Philistines 10
fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man
to his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there
fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of 11
God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and
Phinehas, were slain. And there ran a man of Benjamin 12
out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with
his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And 13
when he came, lo, Eli sat upon his seat by the way side
watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God.
And when the man came into the city, and told it, all
the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the 14
crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult?
And the man hasted, and came and told Eli. Now Eli 15
was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were set,
that he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, 16
I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out
of the army. And he said, How went the matter, my
son? And he that brought the tidings answered and 17
said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath

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iv. 12–18. *How the tidings reached Shiloh and how they affected Eli.*

12. To rend one's clothes and to put earth or ashes on one's head were the universal signs of mourning for the dead (2 Sam. i. 2), or for a national calamity (Joshua vii. 6; 2 Sam. xv. 32).

13. The M.T. is here in some disorder, otherwise Eli, if he sat **by the way side watching**, would have been the first to receive the fugitive's report. The LXX text gives a better reading: 'Lo, Eli sat upon his seat beside the gate [probably the gate of the temple at Shiloh, as in i. 9], watching the way,' a reading confirmed by verse 18.

15. This verse interrupts the narrative, and is probably a later insertion based, in part, on iii. 2. The fact that Eli was an old man is stated by the original author in verse 18.

17. The elements of the fourfold disaster are skilfully arranged —defeat, loss of life, personal bereavement, and finally, the climax of all, the capture of the Ark.

been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy
two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the
18 ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he
made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off
his seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck
brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy.
19 And he had judged Israel forty years. And his daughter
in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered:
and when she heard the tidings that the ark of
God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband
were dead, she bowed herself and brought forth;
20 for her pains came upon her. And about the time of
her death the women that stood by her said unto her,
Fear not; for thou hast brought forth a son. But she
21 answered not, neither did she regard it. And she
named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed
from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and
22 because of her father in law and her husband. And she
said, The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of
God is taken.

5 Now the Philistines had taken the ark of God, and they

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18. forty years: LXX twenty. In chs. i–iii Eli is represented solely as a priest, not as a 'judge'; the clause is editorial.

iv. 19–22. *The effect of the tidings, now aggravated by the death of her father-in-law, on the wife of Phinehas.*

21. Ichabod: Heb. *I-kābōd* = No-Glory, the reference being, as explained in the text, primarily to the capture of the Ark, but including also the loss of those who were its appointed priests.

22. Added as a corrective to 21^b by an editor or reader acquainted with the character of Eli's sons as depicted in the younger narrative, chs. i–iii.

v. 1–5. *The Ark and the image of Dagon.* The underlying idea in chs. v–vi is the superiority of the God of the Hebrews, who throughout this section is so inseparably associated with the Ark as to be almost identified with it (see Appendix, note A), and whose greater power is manifested by the misfortunes of which the chief deity and the whole race of the Philistines are victims.

brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. And the 2
Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it into the
house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when they 3
of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon
was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of
the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his
place again. And when they arose early on the morrow 4
morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the
ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of
Dagon and both the palms of his hands *lay* cut off upon
the threshold; only *the stump of* Dagon was left to him.
Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that 5

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1. Ashdod: the modern *Esdud*, halfway between Joppa and Gaza, and about three miles from the coast, was at this period apparently the chief of the five cities of the Philistine confederation (Pentapolis), a position for which its central situation marked it out.

2. The Ark is deposited beside the statue of Dagon, in the *cella* or *adytum* of the latter's temple. According as the name Dagon is to be connected with *dag*, 'fish,' or with *dagan*, 'corn,' this deity will have been originally a god of the sea, or a god of agriculture. The fairly numerous place-names in Palestine into which the name enters render it probable that Dagon was originally a Canaanite deity, a conclusion in favour of the second of the alternative etymologies just given. Temples were dedicated to Dagon in Gaza (Judges xvi. 21 ff.) and Ashdod—the latter being still in existence in the time of the Maccabees (1 Macc. x. 71 ff.)—and doubtless in the other cities as well. Hebrews and Philistines alike deposited military trophies in temples (cf. xxi. 9 with xxxi. 10, 1 Chron. x. 10).

3. Dagon was fallen: note the identification of the god with his stone image. The latter is found prostrate, but as yet intact, before the Ark of Yahweh, as if in acknowledgement of Yahweh's superiority, of which verse 4 brings still more convincing evidence.

4. A word signifying 'trunk' or **stump** has dropped out of the last clause of the Hebrew, as the Versions attest.

5. A note tracing the custom of leaping over the threshold of the *cella* of Dagon to this *contretemps*. The custom, however, is found in many ancient cults (cf. Zeph. i. 9, and see Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, 116 f.).

come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of
Dagon in Ashdod, unto this day.
6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of
Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with
7 tumours, even Ashdod and the borders thereof. And
when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said,
The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for
his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.
8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the
Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with
the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let
the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath.
And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about
9 *thither*. And it was so, that, after they had carried it
about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a
very great discomfiture: and he smote the men of the
city, both small and great, and tumours brake out upon
10 them. So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it
came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the
Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about
the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our
11 people. They sent therefore and gathered together all

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v. 6–12. *Further evidence of the displeasure and power of Yahweh in the outbreak of plague.*

6. Sickness and disease are referred by the O.T. writers to the direct action of God without the intervention of secondary or contributory causes. In this case it is now agreed that some variety of bubonic plague is intended. The Hebrew word for 'tumours' does not signify 'haemorrhoids,' the 'emerods' of A.V., but, as in R.V. marg., 'plague boils' or buboes.

8. The site of Gath has not yet been recovered. It is usually identified with the modern *Tel-es-Safi*, the Blanche Garde of the Crusaders, about sixteen miles east of Ashdod. See R.V. marg. for the LXX addition to this verse, and to vi. 1, also the note on vi. 4.

10. Ekron: the most northerly member of the Pentapolis, the modern *Tel-Akir*.

the lords of the Philistines, and they said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly discomfiture throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died 12
not were smitten with the tumours: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the 6
Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for 2
the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? shew us wherewith we shall send it to its place. And they said, If ye send away 3
the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a guilt offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. Then said they, What shall be the 4
guilt offering which we shall return to him? And they said, Five golden tumours, and five golden mice, *accord-*

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11. Here the source of their misfortunes is ascribed by the Philistines indifferently to the Ark and to the 'hand of God.'

vi. 1–18. *The restoration of the Ark.* The original narrative appears to have been somewhat curtailed by the editor, for verses 1 ff. do not seem a natural continuation of v. 12.

3. a guilt offering (Heb. *'āshām*): R.V. marg. 'trespass offering,' reversing the position of these terms in A.V. The word occurs only here and in 2 Kings xii. 16 outside of the Priests' Code, and denotes primarily compensation or reparation 'for the infringement of the rights of another, or for misappropriation of his property,' as in the present case.

4 f. Five golden tumours: for the conception underlying this form of offering, see Frazer's *Golden Bough*, 2nd edition, ii. 426 f. Cf. the analogous case of the brazen serpent (Num. xxi. 4 ff.).

five golden mice: the first indication in the M.T. of what, at first sight, seems an additional plague of mice, as expressly stated in the Greek text of verse 6, vi. 1 (see R.V. marg.). This view of the meaning of the golden mice, however, is at variance with the words that follow: 'for one plague was on you all.' The Hebrew word for 'mouse,' moreover, is a comprehensive term

ing to the number of the lords of the Philistines : for one
5 plague was on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore
ye shall make images of your tumours, and images of
your mice that mar the land ; and ye shall give glory
unto the God of Israel : peradventure he will lighten his
hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off
6 your land. Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts,
as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts ?
when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they
7 not let the people go, and they departed ? Now therefore take and prepare you a new cart, and two milch
kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the
kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them :
8 and take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart ;
and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a
guilt offering, in a coffer by the side thereof ; and send
9 it away, that it may go. And see, if it goeth up by the
way of its own border to Beth-shemesh, then he hath
done us this great evil : but if not, then we shall know

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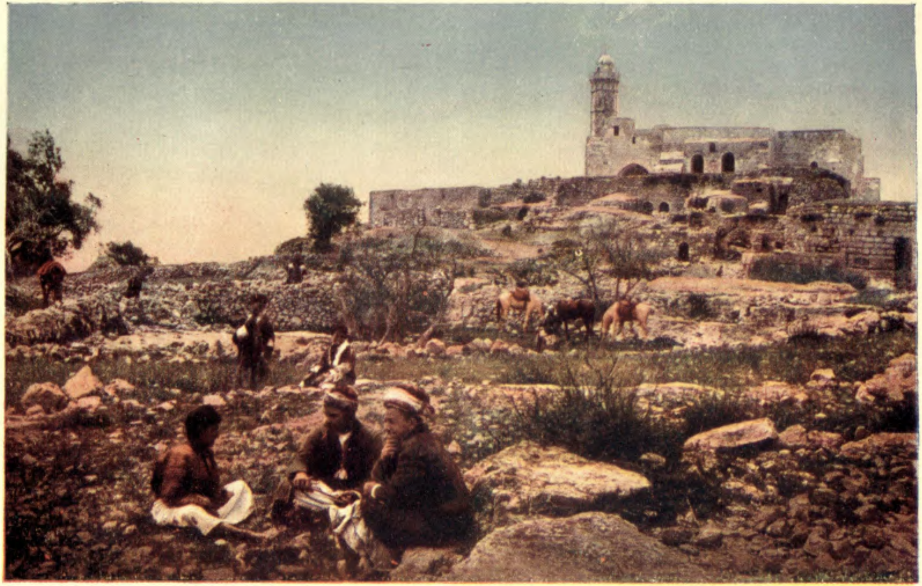
for numerous small rodents, and the introduction of the 'mice that destroy, or spread destruction through, the country'—not 'that destroy the crops'—is to be explained by the well-established fact that rats and similar house vermin 'are at once the earliest victims and the most dangerous propagators of the bubonic plague' (see Dr. Gibson in *Expository Times*, xii. 378-380 ; cf. *ibid.* xv. (1904) 476).

6. The margin 'when he had made a mock [or made sport] of them' is preferable, cf. xxxi. 4 ; Num. xxii. 29. The reference is to Exod. x. 2 (J).

7-9. The procedure here recommended is entirely in the spirit of antiquity, which found omens in so many ways that appear strange to the modern mind. For other omens see xiv. 9 f. ; 2 Sam. v. 24. The two milch kine, like the new cart, are to be such as had never been used for ordinary purposes, as in the parallel cases Num. xix. 2 ; Deut. xxi. 3. All are 'virgin' in the sense in which we speak of 'virgin soil.'

9. he hath done, &c. : the meaning is that if the mother-kine, instead of making direct for their calves, took the road to Beth-



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MIZPAH

that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance
that happened to us. And the men did so; and took 10
two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up
their calves at home: and they put the ark of the LORD 11
upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and
the images of their tumours. And the kine took the 12
straight way by the way to Beth-shemesh; they went
along the high way, lowing as they went, and turned not
aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of
the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh.
And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their 13
wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes,
and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it. And the cart came 14
into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite, and stood there,
where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood
of the cart, and offered up the kine for a burnt offering
unto the LORD. And the Levites took down the ark of 15
the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the
jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone:
and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and
sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. And 16

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shemesh—the nearest point across the frontier—it would be clear that a course so entirely contrary to their natural instincts could only be due to a special impulse from the God of the Hebrews. The source of the present distress would then be evident. Beth-shemesh, 'house (or temple), of the sun,' is the modern *Ain Shams*, 'fountain of the sun,' at the mouth of the *Wadi Sarar*, the ancient 'Valley of Sorek' (Judges xvi. 4).

13. rejoiced to see it: read by a slight change: 'came rejoicing to meet it' (LXX).

14. a great stone: cf. xiv. 33, in both cases clearly 'an altar-stone.' The idea appears to be that the kine spontaneously offered themselves as a sacrifice (*Rel. Sem.*^{2} 309).

15. A post-exilic addition by some one who missed the services of the Levites, the proper ministers of the Ark according to the Priests' Code. The details are impossible after verse 14, which has its proper continuation in verse 16.

when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.

17 And these are the golden tumours which the Philistines returned for a guilt offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath
18 one, for Ekron one; and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities and of country villages: even unto the great stone, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD, *which stone remaineth* unto this day
19 in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite. And he smote of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people seventy men, *and* fifty thousand men: and the people mourned, because the LORD had smitten the people with
20 a great slaughter. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God?
21 and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent

17–18[a] (to 'villages'), another addition in the 'repetitious' style of late writers. The large number of mice here implied is at variance with verse 4 (*five* mice).

18[b]: read, with a slight emendation: 'and the great stone upon which . . . is a witness unto this day in the field,' &c.

19. The M.T. is again in disorder. The text from which the Greek translators worked seems to have run thus (see R.V. marg.): 'Now the sons of Jeconiah rejoiced not among (with) the men of Beth-shemesh when they beheld (with joy) the ark of Yahweh.' This gives at least an intelligible motive, indifference to the honour of Yahweh, for the punishment that follows: 'and he (Yahweh) slew of them seventy men.' The absurd exaggeration 'and fifty thousand men' is an evident gloss.

20. this holy God: different aspects of the Divine character are expressed by the term 'holy' in different contexts. See Davidson, *Theology of the O. T.*, 144 ff., 'the Holiness of God.' Here the majesty and might of Yahweh, and His zeal for His own honour are implied. The incident is a striking illustration of Deut. iv. 24: 'Yahweh, thy God, is a devouring fire,' bringing death to those who do Him dishonour. Cf. Joshua xxiv. 19, 'he is an holy God; he is a jealous God.'

messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD ; come ye down, and fetch it up to you. And the men of 7 Kiriath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

[**D**] And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode 2

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21. Kiriath-jearim : 'the city of thickets,' usually identified with *Kiryat-el-Enab*, nine miles west of Jerusalem, and about the same distance north-east of Beth-shemesh. It was a Canaanite city, one of four which formed the Gibeonite league (Josh. ix. 17), and now almost certainly under Philistine suzerainty. For the bearing of this on the subsequent history of the Ark see on 2 Sam. vi. 1, and more fully in the Appendix.

vii. 1. **sanctified :** the form of the verb here used signifies to set apart persons, things, or places for a sacred use ; the person thus set apart became 'holy,' and therefore qualified to perform the necessary rites, and even to handle the Ark with impunity (see Davidson, *Theology*, 145).

As indicated in the introduction to this section, the original narrative doubtless contained further details of the invasion. In the present text of Samuel we have no explanation of the Philistine ascendancy over Israel, such as is implied by the presence of a Philistine officer with the necessary garrison at Gibeah (xiii. 19 ff.) and at Beth-lehem (2 Sam. xxiii. 14). One result of the present campaign, at all events, was almost certainly the destruction of the sanctuary at Shiloh, to which Jeremiah makes repeated allusion (vii. 14, xxvi. 6 ; cf. Ps. lxxviii. 60, and the note on ch. xxi. 1 below).

(*c*) vii. 2–17. *Samuel the theocratic Judge.*

The interest of the narrative once more centres in Samuel, who appears in this remarkable chapter as the theocratic ruler or judge of all Israel. After prevailing upon his contemporaries to abandon the worship of the heathen deities of the Canaanites, Samuel summons the tribes to a great religious assembly at Mizpah. Here a national fast is held accompanied by a public sacrifice and confession of the nation's sins. While the sacrifice is proceeding, the Philistines suddenly attack the assembled worshippers, but are miraculously repulsed. So complete, indeed, is their defeat that

in Kiriath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after
3 the LORD. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all

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they cease from further attacks during the remainder of Samuel's lifetime, while a large part, at least, of the Philistine territory is ceded to Israel. During Samuel's judgeship, also, there is peace between Israel and the former inhabitants of the country, and an ideal state of society generally prevails. How far this highly coloured picture of Israel in the period preceding the institution of the monarchy is removed from the true historical situation as reflected in our oldest sources will appear in due course. We have here rather a conspicuous illustration of that idealization of the early history of Israel which is a characteristic mark of what is known as the Deuteronomic school of Hebrew historians. The nearest parallel is found in the 'framework' of the Book of Judges (see Thatcher, *Judges*, pp. 5 ff.), a product of the same school. The 'almost rhythmic alternation' of apostasy and oppression, penitence and deliverance which characterizes the schematic setting of the narratives of the greater judges is evident in the present narrative. Samuel, indeed, is here represented as the last and greatest of the judges, God having wrought through his intercession a more marvellous deliverance than any preceding judge had achieved. (See further, Introduction, sect. iv.)

2. for it was twenty years: it is doubtful if much reliance can be placed on this note of time. The sentence in the original is awkwardly constructed, and perhaps had no such note originally, the writer having pictured the reformation under Samuel as following immediately on the return of the Ark. This view is at least in harmony with the Deuteronomistic chronology of Judges xiii. 1, according to which the Philistine oppression lasted forty years, of which twenty were passed under Samson (Judges xv. 20, xvi. 31) and twenty under Eli (1 Sam. iv. 18, LXX).

lamented after the LORD: the verb thus rendered denotes elsewhere 'to lament for the dead,' a meaning hardly suitable here. A slight change gives 'and Israel turned after Yahweh' (cf. 'return,' verse 3). Samuel, it will be noted, is throughout brought into relation with 'all the house of Israel,' just as in the framework of Judges the local or tribal heroes of the older narratives are transformed into theocratic rulers of all Israel.

3. The call to repentance. Any good reference Bible will show the resemblance in phraseology between verses 3, 4, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic parts of Judges (cf. especially Judges x. 10-16 with the present passage).

your heart, then put away the strange gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the chil- 4
dren of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I 5
will pray for you unto the LORD. And they gathered 6

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the strange gods: foreign, non-Israelite deities, such as were worshipped by the native races of Canaan—the Baalim of verse 4.

the Ashtaroth: the Hebrew plural of Ashtoreth, the goddess whom the Babylonians called Ishtar and the Greeks Astarte (cf. xxxi. 10), one of the oldest and most widely distributed of Semitic deities. Among the Western Semites she was the goddess of fertility and the sexual relations; hence rites of a most licentious character were associated with her worship. The name of the goddess was most probably pronounced Ashtart in Palestine (hence the Greek form), the traditional form Ashtoreth being an intentional deformation, as in the case of Molech and the personal names Ishbosheth and Mephibosheth (see on 2 Sam. ii. 8). The plural form here used refers to the various local Astartes (cf. the localization of the Virgin in Roman Catholic countries).

4. the Baalim: each locality, in the same way, had its *ba'al* (*lit.* 'owner,' 'proprietor'), the guardian *genius loci*, and bearing its name, Baal Hermon, Baal Peor, &c. The more important local Baals had proper names; that of Tyre, for example, was known as Melkarth, the Baal of 1 Kings xvi. ff. 'The Baalim and the Ashtaroth,' therefore, may be paraphrased 'the gods and goddesses of Canaan.'

vii. 5-9. *The national religious convention at Mizpah.* Amendment has been promised for the future, but the guilt of past unfaithfulness has yet to be taken away.

5. Mizpah: sometimes also 'Mizpeh' (watch-tower), the modern *Nebi Samwil*, on a lofty height five miles north-west of Jerusalem. It was the rallying place of the tribes in the story of Judges xx. 1 ff., and at a later period the residence of Gedaliah, the governor appointed by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxv. 23). Still later it was selected by Judas Maccabaeus to be the scene of another great day of national humiliation, 'for in Mizpah was there a place of prayer aforetime in Israel' (1 Macc. iii. 44).

I will pray for you: Samuel was both the child of prayer and a man of prayer (viii. 6, xii. 19, 23). In Jer. xv. 1 Moses and Samuel are cited as men of prevailing prayer.

together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out
before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there,
We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged
7 the children of Israel in Mizpah. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up
against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard
8 it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children
of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD
our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of
9 the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and
offered it for a whole burnt offering unto the LORD: and
Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD
10 answered him. And as Samuel was offering up the
burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against

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6. drew water, &c.: we have here a ritual survival from the nomad period of Hebrew history. After the change to the peasant life of Canaan, water, the most precious of desert offerings, was supplanted by the fruit of the vine. On the present occasion the pouring out of the water 'before the LORD' is probably intended also to symbolize the outpouring of the heart in penitent confession.

vii. 7-12. *The attack and miraculous defeat of the Philistines.*

7 f. The Philistines are naturally suspicious of this national gathering, and prepare to nip in the bud any attempt to throw off their yoke. An attack is made while Samuel is in the act of sacrificing. The closing words of verse 8 occur again in the much older narrative (ix. 16), in a setting which illustrates the different theological standpoints of the two writers. Here God works by direct intervention, there through a chosen human instrument.

9. The offering of the sucking lamb (Lev. xxii. 27) is to be regarded as part of the ceremony of expiation following upon confession, rather than as the sacrifice usual at the beginning of a campaign (see on xiii. 9 ff.).

10 f. The discomfiture of the Philistines is represented as having been accomplished by Yahweh alone, without even such co-operation as is implied in the similar incidents, Joshua x. 10 f.,

Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel. And the 11
men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between 12
Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us. So the 13
Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was 14
against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the border thereof did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. And Samuel judged Israel all the days 15

Judges v. 20. 'The men of Israel,' in verse 11, merely complete the rout which Yahweh had begun. The site of Beth-car is unknown.

12. Shen: *lit.* 'tooth' or crag, but the LXX apparently read Jeshanah (2 Chron. xiii. 19), which is here generally preferred.

Eben-ezer: see R.V. marg., also note on iv. 1^b.

Hitherto: of time, 'until now,' not of space, 'thus far.'

vii. 13 f. *The extraordinary result of the Philistine defeat.* The statement that the Philistines 'came no more within the borders of Israel' cannot be reconciled with the facts of history. There cannot be the least doubt that our oldest source is correct in representing the continued oppression of the Philistines as the historical motive of the introduction of the monarchy (see ix. 15–17). The true state of the relations between the Hebrews and their powerful enemies is accurately depicted in the same early source as a state of continual warfare 'all the days of Saul' (xiv. 52). The two verses before us are full of the characteristic phraseology of the Deuteronomic edition of Judges.

14. the Amorites: a general name for the native races of Canaan, specially in the Pentateuch documents E and D; the corresponding term in J is Canaanites.

15 ff. The theocratic ideal has been realized. Under Yahweh, his true king, Israel is at peace from all his enemies within and

16 of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to
Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel
17 in all those places. And his return was to Ramah, for
there was his house; and there he judged Israel: and he
built there an altar unto the LORD.

8 And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he

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without. Samuel is Yahweh's earthly representative, dispensing justice to a united Israel as did Moses in the birth-time of the nation (Exod. xviii. 13 ff.).

16. Beth-el, the modern *Beitin*, ten miles north of Jerusalem, was one of the oldest sanctuaries in the country. This applies also to **Gilgal,** if the famous sanctuary near Jericho is the locality intended, but there were many Gilgals—Gilgal signifies a stone circle—in Palestine (see the Bible dictionaries). For the probable site of **Ramah**, see on i. 1.

B. viii–xii. *The Establishment of the Monarchy.*

The contents of these chapters in their present form, the result of compilation from at least two originally independent documents, may be divided into four sections: (1) viii. 1–22, the demand for a king and 'the manner' of the same; (2) ix. 1—x. 27, Saul the son of Kish anointed by Samuel and chosen at Mizpah; (3) xi. 1–15, Saul delivers Jabesh-gilead from the Ammonites, the kingdom renewed at Gilgal; (4) xii. 1–25, Samuel's farewell address.

These five chapters, recording the election of Saul to be the first king of Israel, have already (see Introduction, sect. iv) been the subject of detailed investigation, as throwing a flood of light upon the literary methods of the Hebrew historians in general and upon the compilation of the Books of Samuel in particular. It will suffice to note here, by way of recapitulation, that, as now arranged, the whole section (chs. viii–xii) gives the impression that the introduction of the monarchy was an act of disloyalty to Yahweh, Israel's true and only King, the theocratic form of government being that under which Israel was intended by God to work out his destiny in the world. On closer inspection, however, it was found that the narrative is not homogeneous, that alongside of certain sections which are hostile to the monarchy are found others in which it is represented as the gift of God and the destined instrument of the deliverance of His people from the oppression of the Philistines. The latter view is reflected in ix. 1—x. 16, xi. 1–11, 15, derived from an early source, M (a history of the introduction of the monarchy), the former in viii. 1–22, x. 17–27, which betray the peculiar standpoint of ch. vii, and may be assumed to belong to the same Deuteronomistic source, D.

made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of 2
his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second,
Abijah: they were judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons 3
walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and
took bribes, and perverted judgement.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves to- 4
gether, and came to Samuel unto Ramah: and they said
unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not 5
in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all
the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when 6
they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel
prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Sam- 7
uel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that
they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but
they have rejected me, that I should not be king over

For further exposition of the numerous points of divergence between the two original narratives, see the Introduction, and the notes below.

(*a*) viii. 1–22. *The demand for a king and the 'manner' of the same.*

1. Israel has continued under theocratic government until the old age of Samuel. As the representative of Yahweh, Samuel delegates part of his judicial functions to his sons, who are installed as judges in the remote south.

2. Joel . . . Abijah: both names contain, as the first and second component respectively, the Divine name Yahweh. Delitzsch in his *Babel and Bible* (English edition by Johns, pp. 71 f., 133 ff.) claims that Joel is found in its full form *Ya-ve-ilu* in Canaanite names as early as *circa* 2200 B. C., a fact of far-reaching significance were it capable of proof. Delitzsch's reading, however, has been vigorously contested (see *inter alia*, *ZATW.*, xxiii (1903), pp. 355 ff.).

viii. 4–9. *The elders of Israel request Samuel to give them a king.* The motives alleged for this request are (1) the unfitness of Samuel's sons to succeed him as the executive of the theocracy, and (2) the popular—and, for the writer, sinful (cf. xii. 17–19)—desire to copy a heathen institution. A third motive is introduced at the end of verse 20.

7. they have rejected me, that I should not be king over

8 them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken me,
9 and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and shalt shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10 [**R**] And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto
11 the people that asked of him a king. [**D**] And he said,

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them: a definite expression of the writer's contention that the theocracy was the form of government under which God had willed that Israel should continue to the end, a position still more definitely formulated in xii. 12^b (cf. Judges viii. 23): 'Yahweh, your God, was your king.'

8. The people's conduct in this matter is of a piece with their ingratitude to Yahweh in the past. The comparison expressed in the last clause is more clearly brought out by reading with LXX 'to me' after 'have done' in the first clause. This view of the period of the judges as a continuous declension from the worship of Yahweh finds its classical expression in the kindred introduction to the Deuteronomic edition of Judges (ii. 11—iii. 16; cf. with this verse especially ii. 12 f. and iii. 11 ff.).

9. the manner (*mishpāṭ*) **of the king:** i. e. his constitutional rights as enumerated verses 11–17, not those usurped by him. Cf. 2 Kings xvii. 26, 'the manner of the God of the land,' the proper rites and ceremonies pertaining to His worship.

10. unto the people that asked, &c.: by themselves these words might be interpreted as in verses 7, 9 above, but the contents of the following address, and especially verses 19 ff., show that Samuel is here addressing a popular assembly as in chs. vii and xii. Löhr in his commentary (see above, p. 31), improving on a suggestion by Cornill, has made it very probable that the editor of this section, in combining the two narratives, M and D, has been obliged to alter the original sequence of the latter in order to avoid relating the election of Saul at Mizpah before he had given us the contents of ch. ix. The original arrangement in D, according to Löhr, whom Nowack follows, was as follows: (1) viii. 1–9, the elders approach Samuel at Ramah; (2) x. 17–19 (to 'over us'), viii. 11–22 (to 'Israel'), the people summoned to Mizpah, exposition of the 'manner of the king'; (3) x. 19^b–24, election of Saul by the sacred lot, followed immediately by (4) xii. 1–25, the farewell address delivered at Mizpah, not at Gilgal, the whole concluded

This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots: and he will appoint them unto 12
him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and *he will set some* to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. And he will take your 13
daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to

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by (5) x. 25–27, the dismissal of the assembly and Saul's return to Gibeah. The verse viii. 10, the last words of viii. 22, and xi. 12–14, which refers back to x. 27, are all due to the harmonizing necessities of the editor, and are here indicated by R. By this arrangement D's narrative unquestionably gains in clearness and consistency.

viii. 11–22. *The King's Right.*

As implied in verse 9, Samuel has convened a national assembly at Mizpah (x. 17, cf. vii. 5), and after accusing the people of their ingratitude and disloyalty to their true King (x. 18 f., cf. viii. 8), proceeds, as instructed (viii. 9), to show them 'the manner of the king.' First among the constitutional rights of the latter is placed his demand for military service—here regarded very differently from xxii. 7—and forced labour (*corvée*) on crown lands and in the royal arsenal (verses 11 f.); then follow the needs of the royal kitchen, and the appropriation of lands to reward the king's favourites (13 f.); the throne, further, has to be supported by taxation, and a numerous retinue of slaves is required to uphold the royal dignity (15 f.).

11. they shall run before his chariots: as a bodyguard of 'runners' for the sovereign; hence adopted by ambitious aspirants like Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 1) and Adonijah (1 Kings i. 5).

12. captains of thousands . . . of fifties: cf. 'captains of hundreds' (xxii. 7, 2 Sam. xviii. 1), all graded units in the organization of the national militia under the monarchy. As this organization was on a territorial basis, a district was known as the 'thousand' (cf. the 'hundreds' of English constitutional history), which also became synonymous with 'clan,' the unit of population which occupied the district (see x. 19, 21). Each tribe consisted of a varying number of clans (R. V. 'families,' ix. 21, &c.), each clan of a number of septs, technically called 'fathers' houses' (ii. 27 f., xvii. 25, and often).

13. confectionaries: compounders of aromatic ointments and

14 be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and
15 give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers,
16 and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men,
17 and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks: and ye shall be his servants.
18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not
19 answer you in that day. But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay;
20 but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us,
21 and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed
22 them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to

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spices (Exod. xxx. 25; cf. 1 Chron. ix. 30 R.V.), hence R.V. marg. 'perfumers.'

15. the tenth: the royal tithe levied on the annual produce of corn-land and vineyard; a third source of tithe is added in verse 17.

16. your goodliest young men: read, with LXX, 'your goodliest cattle'; the royal claim on the freemen has been already stated in verses 11 f.

The tone of this remarkable passage is decidedly hostile to the monarchy as an institution, far exceeding in its condemnation the parallel passage, Deut. xvii. 14–20, in which the king is warned merely against multiplying horses, wives, and wealth. With the rest of the document (D) of which it forms a part, it implies a long and unhappy experience of monarchical government, suggesting a date in the Exile, and the bitter reflections of a school which regarded the defections and excesses of the monarchy as largely responsible for the destruction of the state.

viii. 19–22. *The people persist in their demand.*

20. Note the twofold function of an Eastern monarch—to act as the supreme judge in internal affairs, and to lead his people in battle against external foes.

Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, [**R**] Go ye every man unto his city.

[**M**] Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name 9
was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valour. And he had a son, whose name 2
was Saul, a young man and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any

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22. Go ye every man, &c.: in the present arrangement of the text, Samuel's delay in executing the Divine command of 22^a is inexplicable; by the rearrangement explained above, however, the original continuation of 22^a is to be found in x. 19^b ff.: 'And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Now, therefore, present yourselves,' &c.

(*b*) ix. 1—x. 27. *Saul the son of Kish anointed by Samuel and chosen at Mizpah.*

The compiler at this point postpones the election of the new king, which was impending in viii. 22, in order to introduce a long and valuable extract (ix. 1—x. 16) from the older historical document at his disposal, our M, in which the introduction of the monarchy is presented in a very different light from the marked antagonism of D (see for details the Introduction to this commentary, sect. iv).

ix. 1–14. *Saul sent in search of his father's asses.*

1. The analogy of i. 1 makes it probable that the text originally ran: 'Now there was a man of Gibeah of Benjamin (cf. xiii. 2, 15, xiv. 16) whose name was Kish' (so Wellhausen and others). This Gibeah was also known afterwards as Gibeah of Saul (xi. 4), and since Robinson's day has been generally identified with the modern *Tell-el-Fûl*, about four miles due north of Jerusalem.

a mighty man of valour: rather, 'a man of wealth' (see R. V. marg. and 2 Kings xv. 20) or substance, the owner of a large estate.

2. Saul: in Hebrew *Shā'ûl*, one 'asked' (from God), cf. i. 20.

a young man: the original denotes a man 'in the prime of manhood' (*BDB*, *Heb. Lex.*). Not Saul's age but his physical fitness for kinghood is the point here. Saul was 'every inch a king.' The last clause of the verse, however, looks like an explanatory gloss borrowed from x. 23 where it is more in place. The

3 of the people. And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of
4 the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the
5 Benjamites, but they found them not. When they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come and let us return; lest my father
6 leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us. And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is a man that is held in honour; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can tell us concerning our journey
7 whereon we go. Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present

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grounds on which some scholars have detected a discrepancy—implying a difference of sources—as to the age of Saul at his election between this chapter and xiii. 2 ff., where he is the father of a grown-up son, are illusory.

4. The verbs should be read in the plural throughout. The route followed is uncertain. If **Shaalim**, as is probable, is a corruption of Shaalbim (Judges i. 35, 1 Kings iv. 9), which was near Ajalon, the travellers appear to have crossed the hills to the west of Gibeah, descended the valley of Ajalon, and then turned northwards through the western end of Benjamin to the land of **Zuph**, in which lay Ramah (see i. 1), the home of Samuel.

6. a man of God: the first of three names in this chapter for a prophet, emphasizing the latter's close relation to God. The mark of a true prophet (cf. Deut. xviii. 21 f.) was the fulfilment of his predictions, as illustrated in x. 2 ff. The contrast is here very striking between Samuel, the little-known seer of an Ephraimite village, and Samuel the theocratic ruler of all Israel in chs. vii and viii (D).

7 f. afford an interesting glimpse of early Hebrew custom. It was usual to fee the professional seer either in money or in kind.

to bring to the man of God: what have we? And the 8
servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have in
my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I
give to the man of God, to tell us our way. (Beforetime 9
in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he
said, Come and let us go to the seer: for he that is now
called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.) Then 10
said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So
they went unto the city where the man of God was. As 11
they went up the ascent to the city, they found young
maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them,
Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, 12
He is; behold, *he is* before thee: make haste now, for
he is come to-day into the city; for the people have a
sacrifice to-day in the high place: as soon as ye be come 13

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8. the fourth part of a shekel: not a stamped coin—true coins were a much later invention—but a piece of silver of any shape weighing a quarter of a shekel, *cir.* 56 Troy grains, and worth intrinsically about 8*d.* of our money, but of course of much greater purchasing power. See the writer's article 'Money' in Hastings' *DB.*, iii. 420.

that will I give: better, with LXX, 'that wilt thou give.'

9. A gloss by a later hand, originally written in the margin opposite verse 11, where the word 'seer' first occurs. 'Seer' is the rendering of two distinct Hebrew participles, *rō'eh* and *ḥōzeh*; the former is applied only to Samuel and one other (2 Chron. xvi. 7, 10), which is due to the fact that but a small part of the O.T. can be older than the present narrative, the bulk of our extant literature dating from a period when *rō'eh* had been superseded by *nābî*, 'prophet' (see on x. 5). The later date of ch. iii, compared with ch. ix, is shown by the use there of the latter term (iii. 20).

11. going out to draw water: indicating 'the time of evening,' see Gen. xxiv. 11.

12. before thee, &c.: read, with a slight change of text: 'lo, he is before you (plur.); now, at this moment (as verse 13), he is come into the city' (Wellh., Driver, &c.). See below on verse 14.

in the high place: Hebrew *bāmā*, the standing term for the local sanctuaries at which the sacrificial worship of Yahweh was lawfully celebrated until the reformation of Josiah. Ramah lay

into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you
14 up; for at this time ye shall find him. And they went up to the city, *and* as they came within the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.
15 Now the LORD had revealed unto Samuel a day before
16 Saul came, saying, To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel, and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is

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on the slope of the hill, the village well was at its foot, and the sanctuary, as elsewhere, on the hill-top (note the verbs in verses 11–14). The precision of the topographical vocabulary of the Hebrew historians is a noteworthy feature of their style.

14. as they came within the city: read, with most modern editors, as in verse 18, 'within the gate,' or better 'the gatehouse' (see on 2 Sam. xviii. 24). Samuel seems to have come down from presiding at the sacrifice, as is required by verse 23, with the express object of finding his unknown but expected visitor (see verse 16). After inquiring at the gate if a stranger had entered, he is now on the point of returning for the deferred sacrificial meal at the high place.

ix. 15–26. *The meeting of Samuel and Saul.*

15. the LORD had revealed unto Samuel: *lit.* 'had uncovered Samuel's ear' (as R.V. marg.); the Divine message had come as a 'word' (see verse 17, and cf. the familiar phrase, 'the word of the LORD came unto . . .'), not as a 'vision' (Isa. i. 1, and often). The uncovering of the ear is also used in this document of ordinary communications (xx. 2, 12 f., xxii. 8, 17).

16. I have looked upon: add, 'the affliction (so LXX) of my people,' as Exod. iii. 7. In nothing is the contrast between the historical presuppositions of the earlier and later narratives more conspicuous than in the picture they respectively present of the condition of the Hebrew tribes at this particular crisis of their history. Here the Philistine oppression is at its height, and the 'cry' of God's people 'is come unto' Him, as aforetime in Egypt (Exod. iii. 7). According to the representation of the later

come unto me. And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD 17
said unto him, Behold the man of whom I spake to thee!
this same shall have authority over my people. Then 18
Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me,
I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel 19
answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me
unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day: and
in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all
that is in thine heart. And as for thine asses that were 20
lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they
are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in
Israel? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house?
And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of 21
the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the
least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner? And 22
Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into

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document, on the other hand, the Philistines were completely crushed at the beginning of Samuel's judgeship, and 'came no more within the border of Israel' (vii. 13). The initiative, further, is here taken by Yahweh Himself without the slightest hint of the incidents recorded in the previous chapter. The monarchy is God's free gift to His people; the future 'prince,' in the might of God's own spirit, is destined to be the instrument of their deliverance from the Philistine yoke. The single fact—and it is an important one—in which both narratives agree is the leading part taken by Samuel in the appointment of Saul.

17. Behold the man: the rendering given in R. V. marg. to the rest of this clause is preferable to that of the text, 'Behold the man of whom I said unto thee, This same,' &c.

19. all that is in thine heart: as a 'man of God,' Samuel 'knoweth the secrets of the heart' (Ps. xliv. 21). In the light of Saul's character as revealed in the sequel, we can hardly go wrong in understanding these words as an indication that Saul had brooded in secret over the tyranny of the Philistines, and was perhaps already forming plans for ending it.

20. all that is desirable in Israel: the honour and material advantages of royalty. Cf. Hag. ii. 7 (Driver).

the guest-chamber, and made them sit in the chiefest
place among them that were bidden, which were about
23 thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring
the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee,
24 Set it by thee. And the cook took up the thigh, and
that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And
Samuel said, Behold that which hath been reserved! set
it before thee and eat; because unto the appointed time
hath it been kept for thee, for I said, I have invited the
25 people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. And
when they were come down from the high place into the
26 city, he communed with Saul upon the housetop. And
they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of
the day, that Samuel called to Saul on the housetop,
saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose,
and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.
27 As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel
said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he
passed on,) but stand thou still at this time, that I may

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22. the guest-chamber: rather, 'the dining-hall,' in which the sacrificial meal was eaten, an adjunct doubtless of every important sanctuary. The Greek translators seem to have found a similar hall at Shiloh in their text of i. 18.

24. and that which was upon it: a tautology due to textual corruption. Almost all recent commentators, by a slight emendation, read 'and the fat tail,' a delicacy much esteemed in Syria at the present day. In later times, however, it had to be burned on the altar (Exod. xxix. 22; Lev. iii. 9, both as R.V.). The rest of this verse is admittedly corrupt. H. P. Smith's conjectural restoration is accepted in the main by Budde and Nowack: 'Behold the meal is served! Eat! for to the appointed time we have waited for thee to eat with the guests' (*Intern. Crit. Comm.*, *in loc.*).

25 f. Here also the text is in some disorder. The opening clause of verse 26 comes too soon. We must read with LXX (see R.V. marg.): 'And they spread a couch for Saul on the housetop, and he lay down to sleep. And it came to pass,' &c.

cause thee to hear the word of God. Then Samuel took **10**
the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed
him, and said, Is it not that the LORD hath anointed
thee to be prince over his inheritance? When thou art 2
departed from me to-day, then thou shalt find two men by
Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah;

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ix. 27—x. 1. *Saul anointed by Samuel.*

1. The Greek and Latin versions have a much fuller text in the second half of this verse: 'Hath not Yahweh anointed thee [to be prince over his people Israel? And thou shalt have authority over the people of Yahweh, and shalt save them out of the hand of their enemies (cf. ix. 16), and this shall be to thee the sign that Yahweh hath anointed thee] to be prince over his inheritance.' This repetition of the words of a Divine message is entirely after the Hebrew manner, and the reference to the 'sign' is necessary to explain verse 7. The copyist's eye has simply passed from the first occurrence of 'Yahweh hath anointed thee' to the second, as indicated by the square brackets.

the LORD hath anointed thee: the earliest recorded instance in the O. T. of this almost universal method of consecration to the kingly office. The custom was doubtless one habitually observed by the native princes of Canaan, as may be inferred from the reference to it in the very early passage Judges ix. 8, 15, and from the actual instance of the prince of Nuḥashshe, anointed by Thothmes III (*c.* 1500), as mentioned by his grandson in one of the Tell-el-Amarna letters (see Winckler's edition, No. 37). The origin of the ceremony must be sought in Egypt rather than in Babylonia, where it appears to have been unknown (*KAT.*^{3}, p. 602). At the outset it clearly signified the transference to the person anointed of part of the mysterious holiness or virtue of the deity in whose name and by whose representative it was performed. By the Hebrews the anointing was believed to impart a special endowment of the spirit of Yahweh (x. 6, 10, and especially xvi. 13; cf. Isa. lxi. 1). The kingship is the only office thus consecrated in our oldest sources, hence the king is frequently in the Books of Samuel termed 'Yahweh's anointed,' whose sacrosanct and inviolate character is well illustrated by such passages as xxiv. 6, 10 and parallels. See for the whole subject Weinel's elaborate study in *ZATW.* xviii (1898), 1 ff., especially 20–27, also Kautzsch in Hastings' *DB.*, extra vol., 659 f.

x. 2–13 *Saul's destiny to be confirmed by three signs.*

2. Rachel's sepulchre: 'but a little way' from Beth-el (Gen. xxxv. 16). The present reputed site, a little to the north of

and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and taketh thought for you, saying, What
3 shall I do for my son? Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the oak of Tabor, and there shall meet thee there three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying
4 a bottle of wine: and they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their
5 hand. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the

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Beth-lehem, is due to a late gloss (Gen. xxxv. 19, xlviii. 7) which wrongly identifies Ephrath with Beth-lehem.

Zelzah is unknown, and appears corrupt.

3. **going up to God:** a striking expression for going to worship at the sanctuary, viz. of Beth-el. The kids, the loaves, and the wine were destined for the sacrificial meal (i. 24). The future king is to receive at the hands of the travellers his first tribute of royalty (contrast verse 27).

5. **the garrison of the Philistines:** the true meaning of the word rendered 'garrison' here and xiii. 3 f., 2 Sam. viii. 6, 14 is uncertain. Since this is evidently the correct rendering of a cognate noun in xiii. 23, xiv. 1, &c., the alternative 'officer' (so 1 Kings iv. 19) or 'resident' is on the whole to be preferred (Smith, Budde, Nowack). Either rendering, however, attests the fact that Central Palestine was then in the hands of the Philistines. For **the hill of God** we should probably substitute the marginal rendering 'Gibeah of God' (see on xiii. 3).

a band of prophets: this passage with its sequel, verses 10-13, is important for the evolution of the prophetic order in Israel. As here met with for the first time in Hebrew history, the 'prophets' closely resemble the bands of excited dervishes of the modern Orient. Under the influence of music (cf. 2 Kings iii. 15) they worked themselves into a condition of religious ecstasy, which on occasion might pass into a wild, convulsive (xix. 24), and even dangerous frenzy (xviii. 10), akin to madness (2 Kings ix. 11). While first of all zealots for Yahweh and His worship, these

high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and
a harp, before them; and they shall be prophesying: and 6
the spirit of the LORD will come mightily upon thee,
and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned
into another man. And let it be, when these signs are 7
come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for
God is with thee. [**R**] And thou shalt go down before me 8
to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to
offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace
offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come unto
thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do. [**M**] And it was 9
so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel,
God gave him another heart: and all those signs came
to pass that day.

And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a band 10
of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came mightily
upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came 11
to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that,
behold, he prophesied with the prophets, then the people
said one to another, What is this that is come unto the

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early prophets doubtless worked for their country's deliverance. Patriotism was still inseparable from religion (see Budde, *The Religion of Israel to the Exile*, pp. 97 ff.).

psaltery, &c.: for the instruments here enumerated see the article 'Music' in the Bible dictionaries.

6. the spirit of the LORD: see notes on verse 1 above and on xvi. 14, and for the endowments attributed by the Hebrews to this source, Moore's *Judges* (Intern. Crit. Series), pp. 87 f.

and shalt be turned into another man: otherwise expressed in verse 9: 'God gave (*lit.* turned) him another heart.' Saul's is the first conversion recorded in sacred literature (for the date, tenth century B.C., see the Introduction).

7. Saul, as the future saviour of his country, is instructed to take occasion by the hand (note the literal rendering in the margin).

8. This verse breaks the sequence of the narrative, and is now recognized as a later editorial insertion preparing the way for xiii. 7^{b}–15^{a}, which see.

10. the hill: rather, as margin, 'Gibeah,' see on verse 5.

12 son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? And one of the same place answered and said, And who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul
13 also among the prophets? And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

14 And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were not found, we came to
15 Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee,
16 what Samuel said unto you. And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But concerning the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

17 [**D**] And Samuel called the people together unto the
18 LORD to Mizpah; and he said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms

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12. And who is their father? A difficult phrase. It probably expresses the questioner's surprise that the son of a wealthy noble should associate with a band of fanatics of humble origin, men of no 'family.' A different explanation of the origin of the proverb following, taken from a later source, is given xix. 22 ff.—another of the many indications of the composite origin of the book.

13. he came to the high place: the meeting of Saul and his uncle—probably Ner, the father of his future general, Abner (xiv. 50)—which immediately follows, has suggested that we must read here: 'he came to the house' (so most moderns).

14 ff. In this interview Saul's modesty and prudence are alike conspicuous.

17-19^a (to **over us**). *The people summoned to Mizpah.* This passage, which we have seen reason to regard as the original continuation of viii. 1-9 (D), owes its present position, as introducing the scene at Mizpah, to the editor's desire to reduce to a single chronological sequence the two conflicting accounts of Saul's election which he found in his sources (see above, p. 74 f.). Its contents are a recapitulation of the Divine message, viii. 7 f.

that oppressed you: but ye have this day rejected your 19
God, who himself saveth you out of all your calamities
and your distresses; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but
set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves
before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.
So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the 20
tribe of Benjamin was taken. And he brought the tribe 21
of Benjamin near by their families, and the family of the
Matrites was taken: and Saul the son of Kish was taken;
but when they sought him, he could not be found. 22
Therefore they asked of the LORD further, Is there yet
a man to come hither? And the LORD answered, Behold,
he hath hid himself among the stuff. And they ran and 23
fetched him thence; and when he stood among the
people, he was higher than any of the people from his
shoulders and upward. And Samuel said to all the 24
people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that
there is none like him among all the people? And all
the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

Then Samuel told the people the manner of the 25

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x. 19^b–24. *Saul elected by the sacred lot*, the continuation of viii. 22 (see p. 74 and on viii. 22).

19. by your thousands: i.e. 'by your clans,' R. V. 'families,' the subdivisions of the tribe, and in turn subdivided into 'fathers' houses,' see on viii. 12.

20. was taken: the technical term for selection by the sacred lot, for which see on xiv. 41 f. The procedure in the case of Achan (Joshua vii. 16 ff.) forms a close parallel.

21. A line has fallen out of the Hebrew MS. after 'was taken,' see R. V. marg: 'and he brought the family (i.e. the clan) of the Matrites near man by man' (LXX).

22. Read, again with LXX and R. V. marg: 'Is the man (i.e. Saul) yet come hither?'

25 ff. *Saul returns to Gibeah.* Since Samuel has already in the original sequence of D told the people 'the manner of the king' (viii. 11 ff.), we now expect the farewell address, but the compiler, not inappropriately, has removed the latter to the close of the

kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every
26 man to his house. And Saul also went to his house to Gibeah; and there went with him the host, whose hearts
27 God had touched. But certain sons of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.

11 [M] Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh

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whole section, retaining here, with some redactional adjustments in verse 25, the original close of D's narrative.

26. there went with him the host: read, 'the men of worth,' men brave and loyal, in marked contrast to the disloyal 'sons of Belial.' The expressive description of this spontaneous bodyguard —'whose hearts God had touched'—is unique in the O. T.

27. The last sentence is a corruption of the true opening of the following chapter (see on xi. 1).

(*c*) xi. 1–15. *Saul delivers Jabesh-gilead from the Ammonites. The kingdom renewed at Gilgal.*

The thread of the older source, which was dropped at x. 16, is now resumed. On his return from his fateful interview with Samuel, Saul resumed his place on his father's estate and awaited the 'occasion' foreshadowed by the seer (x. 7). This was supplied, after the lapse of a month (see on verse 1), by the king of the Ammonites attacking the Israelite city of Jabesh-gilead. How Saul, in the expressive words of his later namesake, made market of his opportunity (Eph. v. 16) is recorded in this chapter. On no intelligible hypothesis, on the other hand, can the present narrative be regarded as the continuation of x. 20–27. There Saul has been formally invested with the royal authority and has returned to Gibeah in semi-state. A superficial reading of xi. 4 ff. might suggest that the messengers from Jabesh-gilead had come to Gibeah expressly to invoke the assistance of the new king, but this will be seen to be an entire misconception of the plain sense of the passage (see on verses 4 f.).

1. Nahash the Ammonite: see on 2 Sam. x. 1 f. The Greek text has preserved the true reading here: 'And it came to pass after about a month that Nahash, &c.' (so R. V. marg.).

Jabesh-gilead: i.e. Jabesh in Gilead; the name is still preserved in the *Wadi Yabis* which opens into the Jordan valley opposite *Ibzik* (Bezek of verse 8), but the precise location of the

said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will
serve thee. And Nahash the Ammonite said unto them, 2
On this condition will I make it with you, that all your
right eyes be put out; and I will lay it for a reproach
upon all Israel. And the elders of Jabesh said unto 3
him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send
messengers unto all the borders of Israel: and then, if
there be none to save us, we will come out to thee.
Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and spake 4
these words in the ears of the people: and all the people
lifted up their voice, and wept. And, behold, Saul came 5
following the oxen out of the field; and Saul said, What
aileth the people that they weep? And they told him
the words of the men of Jabesh. And the spirit of God 6
came mightily upon Saul when he heard those words,
and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke 7
of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of messengers,
saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after
Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the

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city is uncertain; *Ed-deir* and *Miryamin* have been proposed. Jabesh figures honourably in the later history of Saul (xxxi. 11, 2 Sam. ii. 4 ff.).

4 f. In the course of prosecuting their appeal for help, the messengers arrive at Gibeah of Saul, where the citizens are moved to tears. Saul, however, is all the while at work in the field, and only learns casually, as it were, the urgency of the situation on his return at nightfall. Clearly, therefore, the purpose of the messengers' visit to Gibeah was not to invoke the aid of a man—be he king or commoner—whom it was not even thought necessary to inform of their arrival.

7. The symbolism adopted by Saul was similar in significance to that of the fiery cross among the Scottish clans in former times. **So shall it be done unto his oxen** is perhaps a toning down of a more vigorous threat applied to the owners of the latter. Cf. the action of the Levite, Judges xix. 29, which, however, is not an exact parallel.

and after Samuel: a later addition by a reader who failed to

dread of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out
8 as one man. And he numbered them in Bezek; and
the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and
9 the men of Judah thirty thousand. And they said unto
the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the
men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by the time the sun is
hot, ye shall have deliverance. And the messengers
came and told the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.
10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow we will
come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that
11 seemeth good unto you. And it was so on the morrow,
that Saul put the people in three companies; and they
came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch,
and smote the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and
it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered,
12 so that two of them were not left together. [**R**] And the
people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul
reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to
13 death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to
death this day: for to-day the Lord hath wrought deliverance in Israel.

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note the subordinate rôle played by the seer in this source compared with the other (D).

the dread of Yahweh: rather, as margin, 'a terror from Yahweh'; so Gen. xxxv. 5 'a terror from God,' where however it paralysed, deterred from, not as here stimulated to, action. Cf. xiv. 15.

8. Bezek: represented by the ruins at *Ibzik*, some fourteen miles south-west of *Beisān*, the ancient Beth-shan, almost due west of the mouth of the *Wady Yabis*, mentioned above. The exaggerated numbers that follow, and the suspicious mention of Judah at this early stage, suggest a later interpolation.

11. in the morning watch: the last of the three watches into which the night was divided (Exod. xiv. 24; Lam. ii. 19; Judges vii. 19). The continuation of this narrative is now found in verse 15. Saul has approved himself worthy of the Divine selection, and is recognized by the people also as their future king. In

Then said Samuel to the people, Come and let us 14
go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. [**M**] And 15
all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul
king before the Lord in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed
sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there
Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

[**D**] And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have **12**
hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me,
and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the 2
king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded;
and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked
before you from my youth unto this day. Here I am: 3

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this the *vox populi* is in harmony with the *vox Dei*. The army, accordingly, repairs to the ancient sanctuary of Gilgal, near Jericho, and with befitting ceremonial installs its victorious leader as king of Israel.

12–14 on the other hand, is recognized by all critics as an editorial paragraph, the purpose of which is to harmonize, as far as may be, the two divergent accounts of the manner and place of Saul's installation. This is so far accomplished by representing the ceremony at Gilgal as a 'renewing of the kingdom,' that is, as a repetition of the scene at Mizpah. Saul, as yet, as it were, merely king *de jure*, now becomes king *de facto*. Verses 12 f. are clearly based upon the closing verses of the younger narrative (x. 25–7).

(*d*) xii. 1–25. *Samuel's farewell address.*

Once more Samuel appears as the judge of all Israel, an office which he now formally abdicates. The whole chapter evidently belongs to the same source as chs. vii and viii, and forms, as we have seen, the natural sequel of x. 20–24. The scene, therefore, of Samuel's farewell has been transferred for harmonistic purposes from Mizpah to Gilgal. The address is an excellent specimen of the rhetorical prose of which the discourses of Deuteronomy are the classical example. Yet, while the style is cast in the characteristic Deuteronomic mould (see notes below), the language shows undeniable points of contact with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the exilic portions of Isaiah, a statement of which the proof must be sought in the larger commentaries of Smith, Löhr, and Nowack.

witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.
4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's
5 hand. And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye
6 have not found aught in my hand. And they said, He is witness. And Samuel said unto the people, It is the LORD that appointed Moses and Aaron, and that brought
7 your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand still, that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he
8 did to you and to your fathers. When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then

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xii. 1–6. *Samuel protests his integrity as judge.*

3. before the LORD, and before his anointed: see on x. 1. The principal occurrences of this notable phrase in the historical and prophetical books are, in addition to verses 1, 5: xxiv. 6, 10, xxvi. 9, 11, 16, 23, 2 Sam. i. 14, 16, all applied to Saul; 2 Sam. xix. 21 (cf. xxiii. 1) David; 1 Sam. ii. 35, and 2 Sam. xxii. 51 (= Ps. xviii. 50) with reference to the Davidic dynasty; Isa. xlv. 1, to Cyrus; 1 Sam. ii. 10, Ps. ii. 2 and elsewhere, to the Messianic king, so expressly Dan. ix. 25 f., the only O.T. passage where the word Messiah occurs in A.V. The R.V. has 'the anointed one.'

a ransom (*kōpher*): the technical term for blood-money paid to the relatives of a murdered man—the *wergild* of the Germanic races—which was strictly forbidden by Hebrew law (Num. xxxv. 31 f.). Here, as in Amos v. 12, it denotes the bribe (so R.V. marg.) offered to a judge to induce him to acquit the murderer.

to blind mine eyes therewith: this reading gives an excellent sense, although some would prefer the interesting variant offered by the LXX, see margin.

6. It is the LORD: better, with LXX: 'Witness is the LORD that,' &c.

xii. 7–15. *The witness of history* (cf. the parallel in Joshua xxiv. 2 ff.).

8. cried unto the LORD (also verse 10, vii. 8 f., viii. 18): like

the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought forth
your fathers out of Egypt, and made them to dwell in
this place. But they forgat the LORD their God, and 9
he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host
of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into
the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against
them. And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We 10
have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and
have served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth: but now
deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will
serve thee. And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, 11
and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the
hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled in
safety. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the 12
children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me,

'he sold them into the hand of' (verse 9), one of the standing formulae of the Deuteronomic framework of Judges, the latter phrase, indeed, occurring nowhere else.

and made them to dwell in this place: this 'expresses just what Moses and Aaron did not do' (Driver); read, therefore, with the Versions: 'and he (Yahweh) made them dwell.'

9 ff. With this reading of Israel's history during the period of the judges the exposition of the author of Judges ii. 11 ff. and parallels should be compared. The scheme is the same in both—apostasy and oppression followed by penitent prayer and deliverance. See further on verses 14 ff.

Sisera, captain of the host of [Jabin, king of] **Hazor:** the inserted words are from the LXX; the reference is to Judges iv. 2 ff.

11. Bedan: a corruption of Barak (see marg.).

and Samuel: this unexpected introduction of Samuel in the third person is most easily explained by the assumption that the author of this chapter had before him, or in his recollection, an edition of the Book of Judges in which Samuel appeared as the deliverer from the Philistine oppression. The existence of such an edition has been maintained on other grounds by several recent critics. The remainder of this verse is thoroughly Deuteronomistic in its phraseology.

12. The first half of the verse is almost certainly redactional. It is difficult to credit the author of this source with a statement so

Nay, but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD
13 your God was your king. Now therefore behold the
king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have asked for:
14 and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. If ye
will fear the LORD, and serve him, and hearken unto his
voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the
LORD, and both ye and also the king that reigneth over
15 you be followers of the LORD your God, *well*: but if ye
will not hearken unto the voice of the LORD, but rebel
against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the
hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your
16 fathers. Now therefore stand still and see this great
17 thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. Is it
not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto the LORD,

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clearly at variance not only with the picture drawn in ch. vii. 13 ff., but even with the closing words of verse 11.

when the LORD [Yahweh] **your God was your king**: the principle of the theocracy in its simplest form, already implied in viii. 7, x. 19 (cf. Judges viii. 23).

14. This long verse illustrates the rhetorical figure termed aposiopesis, the apodosis to the 'if' clause being left unexpressed. The italicized '*well*' of R.V. gives the sense intended. Verses 14 f. are full of Deuteronomistic words and phrases, and present an excellent summary of what may be called the theodicy of the Deuteronomic school. Reading the history of their nation in the light of the ideals and doctrines of the Book of the Deuteronomy, the historians of this school found the master-key to the vicissitudes of the past in the conviction that 'fidelity to Yahweh is rewarded by national prosperity, and unfaithfulness punished by national misfortune' (see Skinner's *Kings* in this series, 15 ff.). This retributive pragmatism is the distinguishing mark of the editorial framework of the Books of Kings.

15. as it was against your fathers: for this read with LXX: 'and against your king,' cf. verses 14, 25.

xii. 16–25. *The people, miraculously convinced of their error, make humble confession.*

17. wheat harvest: the time was early summer (May-June), when thunder and rain are almost unknown in Palestine. The

that he may send thunder and rain; and ye shall know
and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have
done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.
So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent 18
thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly
feared the LORD and Samuel. And all the people said 19
unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy
God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our
sins *this* evil, to ask us a king. And Samuel said unto 20
the people, Fear not: ye have indeed done all this evil:
yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve
the LORD with all your heart; and turn ye not aside: 21
for *then should ye go* after vain things which cannot profit
nor deliver, for they are vain. For the LORD will not 22
forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it
hath pleased the LORD to make you a people unto himself.
Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin 23

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second half of the verse betrays the author's uncompromising hostility to the institution of the monarchy.

21. Read as in the margin, after LXX: 'and turn ye not aside after the vanities which cannot profit,' &c. **Vain things** (Heb. *tōhû*, a barren waste, Gen. i. 2, hence 'nothingness,' 'vanity')—a favourite word of the 'second' Isaiah, by whom the epithets 'vanity' and 'profitable for nothing' are both applied to the idols of the heathen (xliv. 9 f.). This is also the sense here. It is difficult to avoid the inference that the writer of this chapter was, at the earliest, a contemporary of the author of Isaiah xl. ff. (*c.* 540 B. C.). See further, Introduction, sect. iv.

22. it hath pleased the LORD to make you a people unto himself: God's free choice of Israel to be His 'peculiar people' is one of the characteristic ideas of Deuteronomy (See Driver's *Deut.*, pp. xx f.), but goes back to the classical formulation of the covenant relation between Yahweh and Israel in Exod. xix. 5 f. (J).

23. Samuel divests himself of his authority as Yahweh's representative in the theocracy, reserving only the privilege of being his people's intercessor (see on vii. 5).

The original close of D's narrative is probably to be sought in x. 25 ff. (see above).

against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will
24 instruct you in the good and the right way. Only fear
25 the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart:
for consider how great things he hath done for you.
But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed,
both ye and your king.

13 [Z] Saul was [*thirty*] years old when he began to reign;
2 and he reigned two years over Israel. [M] And Saul
chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two

C. xiii-xiv. *Saul's First Campaign against the Philistines.*

In this subdivision it is not difficult to recognize in its main portion (xiii. 2–7^a, xiv. 1–46, 52) the hand of the early historian and friend of the monarchy who has already told us of Saul's first essay in leadership, and of his subsequent elevation to the throne of Israel at Gilgal. Saul's life-work—the work to which he had been expressly called of God through His prophet—was now before him. This was no other than the deliverance of Israel from the Philistine yoke (ix. 16), and to this Saul now bends his energies, assisted by his son Jonathan, whose youthful impetuosity in slaying the Philistine Resident in Gibeah (see on verse 3) struck the first blow in the cause of Hebrew liberty and independence. From a later source we have the account of Saul's rejection, and other accretions to the main story, as will appear in the notes. The present chapter-divisions represent the two sections of the narrative.

(*a*) xiii. *The opening of the War of Independence—Saul rejected at Gilgal.*

1. This verse is an excellent illustration of the way in which notes of all kinds find their way from the margins of ancient MSS. into the text. As it stands it is palpably absurd, since Jonathan was already of an age to be in command of a division of the Hebrew troops. The only plausible explanation is that the verse was originally a note by a reader on the margin of his MS. in this form: 'Saul was . . . years old, &c.; and he reigned . . . years over Israel,' on the model of the editorial note 2 Sam. v. 4. The blanks were intended to be filled in later by computation. For an attempt to compute approximately the real numbers see Introduction, sect. ix, the Chronology of Samuel.

2. Of the troops that had accompanied him to Jabesh-gilead and thence to Gilgal, Saul retains 3,000 picked men, whom he stations

thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mount of Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. And Jonathan smote the garrison of 3
the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. And all Israel 4
heard say that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were gathered together after Saul to Gilgal.

And the Philistines assembled themselves together to 5
fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and

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in three important positions. The similarity of the place-names Geba and Gibeah (both = 'hill'), of which there were several in Central Palestine, has led to confusion between them, and obscured the real progress of the campaign. (See notes below.)

Michmash: the modern *Muḥmās*, high up the *Wadi Suweinit* on its northern side, separated by a narrow valley with steep sides, 'the pass of Michmash' (verse 23), from Geba (xiv. 5).

Gibeah of Benjamin: read 'Geba of Benjamin,' as in verse 16, the town just described as lying opposite Michmash.

3. Jonathan smote the garrison: rather, 'the Resident' or political officer of the Philistines, who had his seat at Gibeah of God (see on x. 5), which should be read for **Geba** of the text. The original seems to have continued thus: 'And the Philistines heard say, the Hebrews have revolted (Wellhausen and most moderns after LXX), and Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land.'

4. to Gilgal: a harmonizing addition to the true text, preparing the way, like x. 8, for the insertion of the later section xiii. 8-15.

5. thirty thousand chariots: the numbers, as so frequently, are absurdly high, and out of proportion to the number of cavalry. The Philistines scored the first success, driving in the advance guard near Beth-el (verse 2), causing Saul to evacuate Michmash, and perhaps inflicting on him a severe defeat, which would explain the panic of verses 6 f.

6 pitched in Michmash, eastward of Beth-aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in
7 holds, and in pits. Now some of the Hebrews had gone over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead ; [?] but as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed* : but Samuel came not to
9 Gilgal ; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither the burnt offering to me, and the

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7. the land of Gad and Gilead : the districts respectively south and north of the Jabbok (*Wadi Zerka*).

xiii. 7^b–15^a. *The first rejection of Saul.*

This passage, as to the origin of which we can only conjecture, must be judged from its author's standpoint, not from ours. The compiler of Samuel has already prepared the way for its insertion at this point (cf. verses 8, 11 with x. 8 and note there). That it interrupts the natural sequence of the early narrative of the Philistine campaign, that it is inferior, to say the least, in historical probability to its parallel in ch. xv, and that it is the product of the religious reflection of a later age are points on which most modern scholars are agreed. The key to its origin and meaning seems to be given in verse 13, read in the light of 2 Sam. vii. 11–16. The reflective piety of an age dominated by the Deuteronomic doctrine of Divine retribution (see on xii. 14 f.) saw in the fact that Saul founded no dynasty like David some heinous sin against the Most High. Tradition had long been busy with the historical fact of Samuel's breach with Saul at Gilgal, and here we have one form of the tradition used to inculcate the truth that the will of God must reign supreme upon the earth. Though it is impossible for the modern reader not to sympathize with Saul in his extremity, yet many times in the previous history of Israel 'man's extremity' had been 'God's opportunity.' So, thought this pious writer, it would have been again at Gilgal, and he has the argument of history on his side (see xiv. 6).

7^b. followed him: read, with LXX (L), 'forsook him trembling.'

9. Bring hither the burnt offering, &c. : the reference is to the ancient custom of opening a campaign with sacrifices for the con-

peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.
And it came to pass that, as soon as he had made an 10
end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came;
and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute
him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And 11
Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered
from me, and that thou camest not within the days
appointed, and that the Philistines assembled themselves
together at Michmash; therefore said I, Now will the 12
Philistines come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have
not intreated the favour of the LORD: I forced myself
therefore, and offered the burnt offering. And Samuel 13
said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not
kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he
commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now 14
thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought
him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath
appointed him to be prince over his people, because
thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded
thee.

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secration of the warriors. Hence to 'prepare' war (Mic. iii. 5, Joel iii. 9, &c., R.V. marg.) is literally to 'consecrate' war, and the 'consecrated ones' of Isa. xiii. 3 (R.V.) and elsewhere are the soldiers. For effects of the war taboo see xxi. 4 f., 2 Sam. xi. 11 ff.

10. Saul went out to . . . salute him: it is significant of the dogmatic standpoint of this passage that of the two chief officers of the theocracy the priest is greater than the king.

13. The point of Samuel's remark is better brought out by a slight change of reading: 'hadst thou kept the commandment . . . the LORD would now have established thy kingdom for ever.' For the bearing of this on the whole passage see introductory paragraph.

14. a man after his own heart: the idealized David of the later Hebrew writers. For the form of the expression cf. Jer. iii. 5, for its substance, 2 Kings xv. 3–5.

15 And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. [M] And Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men.
16 And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Geba of Benjamin:
17 but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that
18 leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual: and another company turned the way to Beth-horon: and another company turned the way of the border that looketh down upon the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

19 [Z] Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews
20 make them swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share,
21 and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock; yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for

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xiii. 15^b–23. *The Philistines overrun the district.* Verse 15^b continues the early narrative interrupted at verse 7. Saul, as we saw, had been compelled to retire upon Geba, leaving Michmash in the enemy's hands.

17. For the direction of the three raiding parties and identification of the sites, see G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.* p. 291, note 1.

18. the way of the border: read, as suggested by the LXX: 'the way of the hill that overhangs the valley of hyenas,' a name still preserved in the neighbourhood.

19–22. Another interpolation inserted into M, giving a legendary exaggeration of the straits to which the Hebrews were reduced. Had it really gone so hard with them, however, as is stated here, one is at a loss to see how Saul could have relieved Jabesh-gilead, and still less how he could have ventured to face the Philistines themselves. The text is much corrupted in parts, as the margin informs us; the student is referred to Driver's *Notes* and the larger commentaries for suggested emendations. Much light on the nature of the implements mentioned in the text will be found in Dr. Post's illustrated paper on those of the Syrian peasantry of to-day, *PEFQSt.*, 1891, pp. 110 ff.

the forks, and for the axes; and to set the goads. So 22
it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was
neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the
people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul
and with Jonathan his son was there found. [M] And the 23
garrison of the Philistines went out unto the pass of
Michmash.

Now it fell upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul **14**
said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come
and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on
yonder side. But he told not his father. And Saul 2
abode in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate
tree which is in Migron: and the people that
were with him were about six hundred men; and Ahijah, 3
the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas,
the son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing
an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was
gone. And between the passes, by which Jonathan 4
sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there
was a rocky crag on the one side, and a rocky crag on
the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and
the name of the other Seneh. The one crag rose up on 5
the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the
south in front of Geba. And Jonathan said to the young 6

(*b*) xiv. *Jonathan's exploit and its sequel.*

2. Gibeah: read 'Geba,' as required by xiii. 16 and verse 5 below, and continue: 'under the pomegranate tree which is by the threshing-floor' (so Wellhausen, reading *migrān* for *migrōn*).

3. Ahijah, the son of Ahitub: usually, but unnecessarily identified with Ahimelech, the priest of Nob, see on xxi. 2.

wearing an ephod: a mistaken rendering for 'carrying the ephod,' see on ii. 28. The statement throws into relief the deeply religious character of Saul, who, like David (xxiii. 9, xxx. 7, &c.), took no important step without inquiring of God by means of this sacred object. See further on verses 18, 41 below, and xxviii. 6.

man that bare his armour, Come and let us go over
unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that
the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to
7 the LORD to save by many or by few. And his armour-
bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn
thee, behold I am with thee according to thy heart.
8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto the
9 men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they
say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we
will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.
10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go
up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand:
11 and this shall be the sign unto us. And both of them
discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines:
and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth
12 out of the holes where they had hid themselves. And
the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his
armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will
shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armour-
bearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered
13 them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed
up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armour-
bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and

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6. there is no restraint to the LORD, &c.: a fine *confessio fidei* of which Gideon's adventure (Judges vii. 4 ff.) is the classical embodiment and illustration. It was quoted with effect by another Hebrew paladin, the hero of a later War of Independence (1 Macc. iii. 18). Cf. 2 Chron. xiv. 11 R.V.

7. The Greek text of the armourbearer's reply is more expressive: 'Do all to which thine heart inclines; behold, I am with thee, as thy heart so is my heart,' a Hebrew idiom for unanimity of sentiment (2 Kings x. 15).

9. Underneath this, to us somewhat casual, method of ascertaining the Divine will, lies the profound conviction that every word and act of men is ordered by the Divine governance. Cf. vi. 7 ff.

his armourbearer slew them after him. And that first 14
slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made,
was about twenty men, within as it were half a furrow's
length in an acre of land. And there was a trembling 15
in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the
garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled: and the
earth quaked; so there was an exceeding great trembling.
And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin 16
looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and
they went *hither* and thither.

Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, 17
Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when
they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armour-
bearer were not there. And Saul said unto Ahijah, 18
Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was

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14. The last clause is exceedingly corrupt, and no satisfactory reconstruction has yet been proposed.

15. The first half of the verse seems overloaded. Deleting the comma after **camp**, we may find four bodies enumerated, (1) the main body of armed men encamped in the open country (**the field**), (2) the array of camp-followers (**all the people**) indispensable to an Eastern army, (3) the outpost garrison surprised by Jonathan, and (4) the foraging parties of xiii. 17 f. An earthquake increased the panic, which the historian terms 'a trembling of—*i.e.* sent by—God' (R. V. marg.). The word panic itself reminds us that such attacks of fright without apparent cause were ascribed by the Greeks to the god Pan.

xiv. 16-23. *General rout of the Philistines.*

16. Gibeah of Benjamin: read 'Geba of Benjamin,' as xiii. 16.

18. The verse as it stands cannot be original, for the simple reason that the Ark was *not* **at that time with the children of Israel**, but in apparent oblivion at Kiriath-jearim. Read with the LXX (see R. V. marg.), as required by verse 3: 'Bring hither the ephod; for he bore the ephod at that time before Israel.' The thoughtless alteration in the received text is due to a scribe who took offence at this ancient method of ascertaining the will of the deity. Cf. the same change 2 Kings ii. 26, which refers back to 1 Sam. xxiii. 9, xxx. 7; in both these passages the original reading 'the ephod' is still preserved.

19 *there* at that time with the children of Israel. And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the tumult that was in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw
20 thine hand. And Saul and all the people that were with him were gathered together, and came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow,
21 *and there was* a very great discomfiture. Now the Hebrews that were with the Philistines as beforetime, which went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about; even they also *turned* to be with the
22 Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in the hill country of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them
23 in the battle. So the LORD saved Israel that day: and
24 the battle passed over by Beth-aven. And the men of Israel were distressed that day: but Saul adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until it be evening, and I be avenged on mine enemies.
25 So none of the people tasted food. And all the people

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19. Withdraw thine hand: before Ahijah is able to manipulate the oracle Saul has become convinced that the time for action has come.

21. into the camp . . . round about: a very slight change removes the awkwardness of the construction in the original and gives the following: 'The Hebrews that were with the Philistines heretofore, and that had come up with them into the camp, they also turned to be with,' &c. (Greek and Syriac Versions).

23. Beth-aven may be Beth-el; but the more natural direction of the flight was westwards (verse 31). Smith and Budde would read 'Beth-horon' with some ancient Versions.

xiv. 24-35. *Jonathan unwittingly violates a food taboo, rashly ordered by Saul.*

24-26. Saul's action at this point must be interpreted in the light of the religious ideas of his time. Yahweh had just shown

came into the forest; and there was honey upon the
ground. And when the people were come unto the 26
forest, behold, the honey dropped: but no man put his
hand to his mouth; for the people feared the oath.
But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the 27
people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of
the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes
were enlightened. Then answered one of the people, 28
and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with
an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth food
this day. And the people were faint. Then said 29
Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray
you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because
I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply 30
the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their
enemies which they found? for now hath there been
no great slaughter among the Philistines. And they 31
smote of the Philistines that day from Michmash to
Aijalon: and the people were very faint. And the 32
people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen,

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that He was present with the host, and the motive of the food taboo or prohibition was, by this act of self-denial, to secure the continued assistance of the deity. The Greek text is here fuller and more intelligible, and by its help the original may be thus conjecturally restored: 'And all the people were with Saul, about ten thousand men, and the battle was spread over the hill country of Ephraim. And Saul vowed a vow on that day, and adjured the people, saying, Cursed . . . enemies. And there was honeycomb upon the face of the ground, and the people came to the honeycomb, and the honey overflowed (Klostermann, or 'the bees had gone,' Wellhausen), but no man,' &c.

29. My father hath troubled the land: this is too feeble for the 'ominous word' of the original; rather, 'my father hath brought disaster upon the land' (Joshua vii. 25; Judges xi. 35, &c.).

32 f. The earliest recorded instance of the abstinence from blood, which the Jews have rigorously observed to the present

and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the
33 people did eat them with the blood. Then they told
Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD,
in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye
have dealt treacherously: roll a great stone unto me this
34 day. And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the
people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man
his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here,
and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the
blood. And all the people brought every man his ox
35 with him that night, and slew them there. And Saul
built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first
altar that he built unto the LORD.

36 And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines
by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let
us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever
seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest,
37 Let us draw near hither unto God. And Saul asked
counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines?
wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he
38 answered him not that day. And Saul said, Draw nigh

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day. It was formally embodied in the later legislation, Deut. xii. 6, 23; Lev. xvii. 10 ff. For the underlying motives see *Rel. Sem.*², pp. 234 f., and the article 'Food' (Kennedy) *EBi.* ii. 1544.

roll a great stone: see on vi. 14. Over and at the base of this altar-stone the blood was poured out, a gift to the Giver of life.

35. the same was the first altar: implying that others followed, which shows that we are still at the very beginning of Saul's reign, and—a fact of much greater significance—that the Deuteronomic doctrine of the legitimacy of the one central sanctuary was still in the future. Throughout this early source, it may be added, Saul appears as a man sincerely zealous for the worship and honour of God.

xiv. 36–46. *The discovery of Jonathan's guilt by means of the sacred lot* (*Urim and Thummim*).

37. he answered him not: the oracle gave no response, affirmative or negative. As the following verse shows, this silence

hither, all ye chiefs of the people: and know and see
wherein this sin hath been this day. For, as the LORD 39
liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my
son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man
among all the people that answered him. Then said he 40
unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan
my son will be on the other side. And the people said
unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee. Therefore 41
Saul said unto the LORD, the God of Israel, Shew the
right. And Jonathan and Saul were taken *by lot*: but
the people escaped. And Saul said, Cast *lots* between 42
me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.
Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast 43
done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did certainly

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was interpreted, in harmony with the ideas of the time, as a sign of the Divine displeasure. Saul at once concludes that this must be due to a breach of the food taboo, and proceeds by another appeal to discover the guilty party.

41. Shew the right (Heb. *tāmîm*): neither this nor the alternative rendering, 'give a perfect lot' (A.V., R.V. marg.), can be got from the Hebrew text. Happily the Greek text has preserved a reading which bears on its face the evidence of its genuineness: 'And Saul said, O Yahweh, God of *Israel*, why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If the iniquity be in me or in my son Jonathan, Yahweh, God of *Israel, give* Urim; but if thou sayest thus, the iniquity is in thy people Israel, *give* Thummim. And Saul and Jonathan were taken,' &c. A careless copyist allowed his eye to pass first over two lines, then over one line, between the identical words given in italics above. The passage is of the first importance for the light which it throws on the nature of the mysterious Urim and Thummim, and of the manner of manipulating the sacred lot. Reference may here be made to the writer's discussion of the subject in Hastings' *DB.* iv. 838 ff. (article 'Urim and Thummim').

42. Here too we have a fuller Greek text, and the presumption is again in its favour, in view of verse 45: 'And Saul said, Cast between me and Jonathan, my son, and whomsoever Yahweh shall take he shall die. And the people said to Saul, It shall not be so: but Saul prevailed over the people. And they cast between him and his son Jonathan, and Jonathan was taken.'

taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in
44 mine hand; and, lo, I must die. And Saul said, God
do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.
45 And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who
hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid:
as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head
fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this
day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.
46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and
the Philistines went to their own place.

47 [R] Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and

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43. lo, I must die: this rendering is unfair to the heroic Jonathan; it should be, 'lo, I am ready to die.' Cf. Josephus' rhetorical but truthful expansion, *Antiq.* VI. vi. 5. To our modern way of thinking, Jonathan was innocent and Saul doubly blameworthy, first because of his rash vow, and secondly, because he insisted with an oath on the death of an innocent man. But as regards the former charge, we have seen how entirely the food taboo reflected the primitive religious ideas of the time, and as regards the second, Jonathan himself acknowledged that he had incurred the death penalty. It must be remembered, however, how undeveloped as yet was the inward and moral conception of sin. A man was often aware that he had sinned only by the unpleasant consequences, as in this case and in the case of Balaam (Num. xxii. 34). See further W. R. Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, lecture iii, 'The Hebrew Conception of Sin.'

xiv. 47–51. *A summary of Saul's conquests and of his family connexions*, closing the first division of Samuel. The occurrence in this section of certain characteristic expressions of the Deuteronomic school (e. g. 'all his enemies on every side,' Judges ii. 14, 1 Sam. xii. 11, 'them that spoiled them,' Judges ii. 14 ff.) has led to the conclusion, first suggested by Budde, that we have here a summary paragraph from the pen of the Deuteronomic editor, in which he formally takes leave of Saul before introducing his successor (see further Introduction, sects. iv f. and on 2 Sam. viii).

47. the kings of Zobah: see on 2 Sam. viii. 3.

against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed *them*. And he did valiantly, and 48 smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.

Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishvi, and 49 Malchi-shua: and the names of his two daughters were these; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: and the name of Saul's wife was 50 Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the 51 father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

[M] And there was sore war against the Philistines all the 52 days of Saul: and when Saul saw any mighty man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

[S] And Samuel said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to 15

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he vexed them: read with LXX, 'he was victorious.'

49. Ishvi: a corruption of Ishyo, a contracted form of Ish-Yahweh, 'the man of Yahweh,' and a synonym, therefore, of Ishbaal, see on 2 Sam. ii. 8.

50. Read as in R.V. marg.: 'And Kish the father of Saul and Ner the father of Abner were the sons of Abiel' (cf. ix. 1). Abner, therefore, was Saul's cousin, not his uncle as stated 1 Chron. viii. 33, ix. 36.

52. The continuation and close of the extract from the early narrative of the introduction of the monarchy, which opened with ix. 1. The discrepancy between the contents of this verse and the unhistorical representation of the later source (vii. 13) has been already commented upon. The second half of the verse seems designed to prepare us for the introduction of David, xvi. 14 ff.

Second Division. 1 SAMUEL XV—2 SAMUEL VIII.

SAUL AND DAVID.

A. 1 Sam. xv–xx. *The rejection of Saul and introduction of David. Saul's jealousy and its results.*

The second division of the Books of Samuel opens with another account of Saul's rejection, which prepares the way for the entry upon the scene of David, the son of Jesse, who from this point

anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now
therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of
2 the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I have marked
that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself
against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt.
3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that

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onward is the central figure of the story. Four subdivisions may be recognized, the first embracing chapters xv–xx, the contents of which may conveniently be distributed among the following sections: (*a*) xv. 1–35^a, (*b*) xv. 35^b—xvi. 13, (*c*) xvi. 14–23, (*d*) xvii. 1—xviii. 5, (*e*) xviii. 6–30, (*f*) xix. 1—xx. 42. The problems—literary, historical and textual—presented by these six chapters are among the most difficult, as they are certainly not the least interesting, with which the critical student is confronted in the Books of Samuel.

(*a*) xv. 1–35^a. *Saul's second rejection by Samuel.*

In this section we have an account of the breach between Samuel and Saul, which betrays no acquaintance with, and must be regarded as entirely independent of, the account already given in ch. xiii. The absence of the characteristic and readily recognizable phraseology of the Deuteronomic school shows that it originally formed no part of the document we have termed D, while its inculcation of the prophetic doctrine, that 'to obey is better than sacrifice' (verse 22), betrays a more advanced theological standpoint than the early historical source, M, which we have just left. The majority of scholars are agreed in assigning it 'an intermediate position between the two currents of narrative, ix. 1, &c. and ch. viii, &c. [i. e. between our M and D]; it presupposes the former (for verse 1 points back to x. 1, and a phrase in verse 19^b appears to be borrowed from xiv. 32), but approximates in its prophetic tone to the latter' (Driver, *LOT.*^{6}, 178 f.). Inasmuch as the rôle in which Samuel appears suggests the prophet of iii. 20, we have assigned it provisionally to the same source as chs. i–iii, viz. S.

2. I have marked: rather, 'I will visit,' i. e. punish.

Amalek was a nomad people inhabiting the steppes of the Sinaitic peninsula. The 'theoretical motive' here suggested for the expedition—the reference is to Exod. xvii. 8 ff. (cf. Deut. xxv. 17 ff.)—though itself the product of later reflection, does not invalidate the general historicity of the narrative. 'There is no occasion to question the fact that Saul really chastised the Amalekites, and that Samuel actually offered Agag, as the best of the spoils of war, to Yahweh at Gilgal' (Wellhausen, *Comp. d. Hexateuchs*^{3}, p. 247).

3. and utterly destroy, &c.: that is, put to the ban, which is

they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.
And Saul summoned the people, and numbered them 4
in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to the city of 5
Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said 6
unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul smote the Amalekites, 7
from Havilah as thou goest to Shur, that is before Egypt.
And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and 8
utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the 9

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the meaning of the marginal note 'devote' (to Yahweh). The institution of the ban (*ḥerem*) is frequently referred to in early Hebrew history. Two degrees of severity are found—the one involving, as in the case before us, the destruction of every living creature together with every vestige of property, the other involving only the death of the human beings, the cattle and the spoil in this case becoming the property of the victors. For the underlying ideas, see article 'Ban' (Bennett), *EBi.*, i. 468 ff., and Kautzsch in Hastings' *DB.*, extra vol., 619 f. 'The religious element,' according to the latter scholar, 'is found in the complete renunciation of any profit from the victory, and this renunciation is an expression of gratitude for the fact that the war-God has delivered the enemy, who is His enemy also, into the hands of the conqueror.'

4. Telaim: rather Telam, as xxvii. 8 (LXX), otherwise Telem, Joshua xv. 24, in the south of Judah.

6. The **Kenites** were also a nomad tribe of the peninsula, with whom Moses was connected by marriage (Judges i. 16, where, according to the true text, they are mentioned as dwelling among the Amalekites).

7. from Havilah, &c.: the original is obscure, perhaps 'from Telam until thou comest to Shur (Exod. xv. 22), eastwards from Egypt.' Cf. xxvii. 8.

9. The obscurity is here still greater, but the R.V. seems to give the sense intended. Only the ban of the second degree was best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

10 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,
11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And Samuel was wroth;
12 and he cried unto the LORD all night. And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a monument, and is gone about, and passed
13 on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the
14 LORD. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the
15 oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.
16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said

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carried out, and even that not thoroughly, for Agag was spared. Saul's motive for this clemency is not recorded.

xv. 10–23. *Samuel's rebuke and Saul's excuse.*

12. Carmel: a place seven or eight miles south of Hebron, which figures prominently in the history of David (xxv. 5 ff.). The **monument** (Hebrew 'hand,' as 2 Sam. xviii. 18) was in honour of the victory over Amalek. The scene of Saul's second rejection, as of the first, is laid at **Gilgal** in the Jordan Valley.

15. Convicted of falsehood, Saul proceeds to lay the blame upon the people, at the same time pointing out that Yahweh will receive His share all the same, only by way of a formal sacrifice. In this way hypocrisy is added to falsehood.

unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, Though thou wast
little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of
the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed thee
king over Israel; and the LORD sent thee on a journey, 18
and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the
Amalekites, and fight against them until they be
consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the 19
voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst
that which was evil in the sight of the LORD? And Saul 20
said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the
LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me,
and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have
utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took 21
of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted
things, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.
And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in 22
burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of
the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and
to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin 23

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20 f. Saul repeats his former plea, attempting 'to unite obedience in the general with a trifle of disobedience in the particulars' (Wellhausen).

22. Samuel's reply is couched in the rhythmical form peculiar to Hebrew poetry and the higher prophetic style, and consists of four distichs with the usual parallelism. In the great words 'to obey is better than sacrifice' the author of this chapter brings to a luminous point the whole ethical teaching of the Hebrew prophets from Amos downwards (see Amos v. 21–24: Isa. i. 10–17; Mic. vi. 6–8 and—the nearest in expression—Hos. vi. 6 and Jer. vii. 22 f.). The O. T. has no word for 'duty'; its moral ideal is embodied in the words 'as the LORD commanded.' Samuel's 'obedience,' accordingly, is but another aspect of Hosea's 'mercy' —'I desire mercy (*hesed*, loving deeds), not sacrifice,' a golden truth twice re-affirmed by our Lord Himself (Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7). 'Not all the blood of beasts, On Jewish altars slain' can take the place of clean hands and a pure heart, and the love that fulfils itself in the service of our fellow men.

23. the sin of witchcraft: rather, as margin, 'divination,'

of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim.
Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he
24 hath also rejected thee from being king. And Saul said
unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the
commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I
25 feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now there-
fore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me,
26 that I may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto
Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected
the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee
27 from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned
about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his robe,
28 and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath
rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath
given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.

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a more general term. The rendering 'arrogance' or 'presumption' (BDB, *Heb. Lex.*) is more appropriate to Saul's sin than **stubbornness.** It is doubtful, further, if the word in the original can bear the meaning **idolatry.** The parallelism requires a genitive construction, and one Greek translator read: 'the iniquity of idols.' The couplet, therefore, will run:

> Rebellion is (as) the sin of divination
> Arrogance is (as) the iniquity of teraphim.

The **teraphim,** it is now agreed, were images of some sort, sometimes, if not always, in human form, or at least with a human head, as appears from xix. 13 ff. They are associated with divination, as here, in 2 Kings xxiii. 24, Ezek. xxi. 21, Zech. x. 2, and with the ephod in Judges xvii f., Hos. iii. 4. By the more spiritual teachers of Israel, the teraphim were held to be incompatible with the religion of Yahweh (Gen. xxxi. 19, 34, xxxv. 2, 4). This stanza, like the foregoing, presupposes the teaching of the eighth-century prophets, and requires for the chapter a later date than that of the document M (see introductory note, p. 110).

24 ff. Saul confesses his sin and begs to be forgiven, but in vain. 'The author means to teach that the most sincere repentance is of no avail when God has made his final decision' (H. P. Smith). Saul's rejection is indicated first in express terms (verse 26) and then symbolically (verse 28).

28. a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou: 'even to

And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: 29
for he is not a man, that he should repent. Then he 30
said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee,
before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and
turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy
God. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul 31
worshipped the LORD.

Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the 32
king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him
delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death
is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made 33
women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among
women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the
LORD in Gilgal.

Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to 34
his house to Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel came no 35
more to see Saul until the day of his death; for Samuel

David' (xxviii. 17, where see notes). Here we have another of the frequent 'omens' to be found in this book (see p. 64). The incident is therefore to be distinguished from the premeditated rending of Ahijah's garment, 1 Kings xi. 30.

29. the Strength of Israel: the precise meaning is uncertain. The margin gives 'Victory,' or 'Glory.'

32 ff. *Samuel executes the ban upon Agag.*

delicately: the word so rendered has not yet been satisfactorily explained, and may be corrupt. It is almost certain that neither voluptuousness nor cheerfulness (R.V. marg.) is intended. The Greek has 'trembling.'

33. before the LORD in Gilgal: i. e. at the altar of Yahweh, to whom everything included in the ban was 'devoted.'

34. The statement here made that Samuel and Saul never met again in life, when compared with xix. 23 f., is one of the many indications of the diversity of the sources from which the material of the Books of Samuel has been derived. In his grief over Saul's rejection, Samuel recalls the type of religious zealot—by no means rare in the Church—who unites the tenderest of hearts with the sternest of creeds. The latter half of the verse is better taken with the chapter following.

mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had
made Saul king over Israel.

16 And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou
mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being
king over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will
send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided
2 me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can
I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD

(*b*) xv. 35^b—xvi. 13. *David secretly anointed by Samuel.*

In chapters xvi and xvii, as they now appear in our Hebrew Bibles, David is introduced to the reader in no fewer than three passages, xvi. 1 ff., xvi. 14 ff., and xvii. 12 ff. That these passages are mutually independent is now generally admitted. The remarkable contradiction between xvi. 21 ff. and xvii. 55 ff. has long been the subject of comment and of many futile attempts at harmonizing. It is further noteworthy that neither of these sections of the narrative betrays the slightest acquaintance with the contents of xvi. 1 ff. (see especially on xvii. 28), nor does David anywhere in the sequel betray the least consciousness of the high destiny marked out for him by this scene at Beth-lehem (note xviii. 18, and the fact that Saul alone in these chapters is called 'the LORD'S anointed'). The more recent critics have all but unanimously put down the section before us as a late addition to the original Book of Samuel, derived from such a collection of edifying expansions of the latter as that cited 2 Chron. xxiv. 27, 'the Midrash of the book of the kings' (for which see Driver, *LOT.*^{6}, 529). But the easy transition from ch. xv does not suggest a mere interpolator, and, moreover, we naturally expect the author of chapter xv to furnish us with something more explicit and detailed regarding Saul's destined successor than the vague reference in verse 28. We prefer therefore, with H. P. Smith (cf. the arguments of N. Peters, *Beiträge zu . . . Samuel*, 70 ff.), to regard xvi. 1-13 as a further extract from the same source as the preceding chapter, that is, from the prophetic biography of Samuel (S). It is true that the portrait of Samuel in the two narratives is not entirely consistent (see on verse 2), but if, as we believe, the author derived his materials from the popular traditions of his time, perfect consistency is not to be expected. The section properly begins with xv. 35^b; 'And the LORD repented,' &c.

2. Samuel's hesitation, as has just been admitted, is scarcely what we should have expected of the fearless spokesman of Yahweh in xv. 14 ff.

said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to
sacrifice to the LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, 3
and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt
anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. And 4
Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to
Beth-lehem. And the elders of the city came to meet
him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And 5
he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the
LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the
sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and
called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when 6
they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said,
Surely the LORD's anointed is before him. But the 7
LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance,
or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected
him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man
looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD
looketh on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, 8
and made him pass before Samuel. And he said,
Neither hath the LORD chosen this. Then Jesse made 9
Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the
LORD chosen this. And Jesse made seven of his sons 10
to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse,
The LORD hath not chosen these. And Samuel said 11
unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said,
There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he

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5. sanctify yourselves: a frequent expression for preparation for worship by means of ablutions and abstinence from whatever might render one ceremonially unclean (Exod. xix. 10, 14 f., and often).

7. the LORD seeth: as the italics show, these words have been supplied (from the LXX); their omission in the Heb. text is purely accidental. The thought of God as the Searcher of hearts is a favourite with Jeremiah (xi. 20, xvii. 10, xx. 12), and is the theme of Ps. cxxxix.

keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come
12 hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him:
13 for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14 [M] Now the spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul,
15 and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And

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11. we will not sit down: i. e. to the common meal which followed the sacrifice (i. 4 f., ix. 22 ff.).

12. he was ruddy: only of David (also xvii. 42) and Esau (Gen. xxv. 25), and generally taken as referring to the colour of the skin. Possibly, however, it refers to the colour of the hair. Klostermann, indeed, would add this noun to the text. It is interesting to think of David as the *red-haired* 'darling of the songs of Israel' (2 Sam. xxiii. 1), or, as Browning has it in his *Saul*, 'God's child with His dew, On thy gracious gold hair.'

and withal: a very dubious rendering. Read here and xvii. 42, with Graetz and most moderns, by inserting a letter: 'a stripling (so xvii. 56) with beautiful eyes (see marg.) and of a comely person.'

13. For the endowment of the spirit as conveyed by the act of anointing, see on x. 1. Here we have the first mention of **David,** a name peculiar, in the O. T., to Israel's national hero. The etymology of the word is uncertain. It may either be akin to Dodo or Dodai (2 Sam. xxiii. 24), and the fuller form Dodavahu (2 Chron. xx. 37, R. V.), both probably signifying 'Yahweh is a friend' or 'is beloved,' or it may have underlying it, as is suggested by its unique occurrence, the name of some obscure Canaanite deity (cf. the names Dudu, in the Amarna tablets, and Dido of Carthage). The best recent study of David is perhaps the article by H. A. White in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

(*c*) xvi. 14–23. *David brought to court as the king's minstrel.*

Of the two extant accounts of David's introduction to Saul (cf. xvii. 55 ff.), it is admitted on all hands that the account here given is the older, and the one to which alone an historical value attaches. There need be no hesitation in assigning it to the early source, M.

14. an evil spirit from the LORD: This expression, like so

Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit
from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command 16
thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man
who is a cunning player on the harp: and it shall come
to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that
he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.
And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man 17
that can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered 18
one of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen
a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in
playing, and a mighty man of valour, and a man of war,
and prudent in speech, and a comely person, and the

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many others in this ancient document, must be interpreted in the light of the ideas of its time. All antiquity was at one in ascribing every form of disease, and mind-sickness in particular, to the agency of evil spirits. As the presence of such a spirit was impossible while Saul was still under the influence of the spirit of Yahweh (x. 10), it was evident to the thought of the time that this Divine influence had been withdrawn. And yet, since Yahweh was supreme in the realm of spirits, the evil spirit could only come from Him and by His permission. Saul is usually believed to have suffered from morbid melancholia. A recent authority (Professor Macalister in Hastings' *DB.*, iii. 327), however, informs us that 'his case is a typical one of recurrent paroxysmal mania rather than of melancholia.' The influence of music on such morbid natures was and is universally recognized.

18. prudent (better, as marg., 'skilful') **in speech:** this must either refer to the recitative which accompanied the music, or signify 'of a ready wit,' one of the necessary qualifications of an Eastern musician (see Lane, *Arabian Society in the Middle Ages*, 176). David is here described as at once a 'cunning' or expert harpist and a skilful improvisor or poet. This enumeration of his qualifications for the post of the king's minstrel is now cut in two by the irrelevant description of David as **a mighty man of valour and a man of war.** That they are an intrusion, suggested probably by xiv. 52^b, is further shown by the well-attested youth of David at this date, (see Introduction, sect. ix), and by his employment now 'with the sheep' of Jesse (verse 19), and afterwards as Saul's armour-bearer (verse 21), a post entirely beneath the dignity of a 'man of war' (see on xvii. 33, and cf. xiv. 13). The bearing of all this on the literary analysis will appear presently.

19 Lord is with him. Wherefore Saul sent messengers
unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is
20 with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass *laden* with bread,
and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David
21 his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood
before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became
22 his armourbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let
David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found
23 favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the *evil*
spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp,
and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and
was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

17 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to

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20. an ass laden **with bread:** an attempt, as the italics show, to make sense of a corrupt text; read: 'ten loaves of bread' (cf. xvii. 17).

(*d*) xvii. 1—xviii. 5. *David and the Philistine champion.*

By a strange irony the chapter of 1 Samuel which contains perhaps the most popular incident in the book presents the most complicated of its literary problems to the scholar. For in addition to the ordinary questions of the higher criticism, which deals with the literary sources and their historical value, we have here to reckon with a serious problem in the domain of the lower, or textual, criticism. Of the sixty-three verses contained in the received text of this section, more than thirty are wanting in the original text of the oldest Greek Version (Codex B), viz. xvii. 12–31, 41, 50, 55–58, xviii. 1–5. The question is, which of the two forms, the longer Hebrew, or the shorter Greek form, represents the text as it left the hands of the compiler of Samuel? At first sight the fact that, in the longer text, David appears as an absolute stranger to Saul (xvii. 55 ff.), when in reality he had been for some time a member of his court (xvi. 20 ff.), naturally suggests that the parts above enumerated have been deliberately omitted by the Greek translators for harmonistic purposes. Such, indeed, is the opinion of many of our foremost critics, Wellhausen, Budde, Cheyne, Driver, and others. On the other hand, not a few scholars of equal eminence maintain that the verses in question are later additions to the original text of Samuel from an independent account of the Goliath episode, and that the part that remains when these are excised is complete in itself. This view,

battle, and they were gathered together at Socoh, which
belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Socoh and
Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of 2
Israel were gathered together, and pitched in the vale of
Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.
And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one 3
side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other

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it is further maintained, is confirmed by the imperfect connexion between verses 11 and 12 and verses 31 and 32 in our present text (see notes below). The case for the originality of the shorter text has been ably argued by the late Robertson Smith in his *OTJC.*², 120 ff., 431 ff., who has been followed by Stade, Cornill, H. P. Smith, Löhr, Nowack, Kirkpatrick (*Cambridge Bible*), and Peters. Their position seems to the present writer to afford the best solution of an admittedly difficult problem.

It remains now to inquire how this result will affect the literary analysis. The additions, as we must regard them, of the present text at once fall apart as later accretions (Z). The remaining half of the section, xvii. 1–11, 32–40, 42–54, recent critics almost without exception assign to a source distinct from, and younger than, the early source (our M) to which xvi. 14–23 is now unanimously attributed. The main and continually recurring argument in support of this attribution is that in xvii. 1 ff. David appears as a youth, whereas in xvi. 14 ff. he is represented as a man of mature years and of wide repute as a man of war, a position which has been shown above to be entirely due to a later erroneous insertion in xvi. 18. Hebrew tradition, we maintain, is consistent in representing David as a youth of eighteen or twenty (see Introduction, sect. ix) at his introduction to the court of Saul. Robertson Smith alone ventured to regard xvii. 1 ff. as the continuation of xvi. 14–23 (*OTJC.*², 435). An attempt will be made in the notes to follow the hint thrown out by this acute critic, and to meet the objections that may reasonably be taken to this attribution.

1 f. For details of the topography of this chapter, see the dictionaries, G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.*, 226 ff., and especially W. Miller, *The Least of all Lands*, ch. v, with map of the battlefield. The latter lay in the valley of **Elah,** the modern *Wadi es-Sunt.* On its southern edge lay **Socoh,** the modern *Shuweikeh;* the name Socoh has recently been found on jar-handles in this neighbourhood. The other sites have not been identified. Saul, as we shall see, was naturally accompanied to the field of battle by his youthful armourbearer.

4 side: and there was a valley between them. And there
went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines,
named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and
5 a span. And he had an helmet of brass upon his head,
and he was clad with a coat of mail; and the weight of

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4. Goliath, of Gath: modern critics are practically unanimous in regarding the famous encounter related in the sequel as unhistorical. One of the main arguments—that it formed no part of the earliest extant source—has been already dealt with. More serious is the difficulty raised by the statement from an undoubtedly ancient document that the slayer of Goliath was a Beth-lehemite, Elhanan, the son of Jair (2 Sam. xxi. 19, where see note for true text), in the reign of David. By the recognized principles of historical criticism, this early authority is the more worthy of credit, assigning as it does to an obscure champion a feat which, as can readily be believed, a later tradition loved to assign to its favourite hero, David. But we are convinced that the real relation between these mutually inconsistent statements has not hitherto been satisfactorily explained. An examination of the original and shorter form of the narrative before us discloses the remarkable fact that David's opponent is throughout termed 'the Philistine' or 'this Philistine,' with the single exception of verse 4. We are driven to the conclusion that in the source M, which we believe the compiler to be following here, *the Philistine champion was nameless.* The identification with Goliath of the later Elhanan episode was rendered all the more easy by the common description of their respective spears by means of a popular comparison to a weaver's leash-rod (see on verse 7, and cf. 2 Sam. xxi. 19). The historicity of the achievement by which David gained his early renown and aroused the jealousy of Saul (xviii. 6 ff.) is thus vindicated. The passage last referred to is unanimously assigned to the same source as xvi. 14–23, and the critics, by regarding xvii. 1 ff. as a legendary extract from a later source, are obliged to postulate in its place some other feat of arms sufficient to account for this sudden access of royal jealousy. But it is difficult to see the compiler's reason for omitting such an achievement had he found it in his source.

six cubits and a span: about nine feet six inches. The span was half the cubit, which was somewhat under eighteen inches (Hastings' *DB.*, iv. 909).

5. a coat of mail: the original implies that it was composed of scales of bronze. Its weight, 5,000 shekels of bronze, was probably about 220 lb. avoirdupois, according to the standard termed by the present writer 'the Syrian or 320 grain unit' (see 'Weights and Measures,' *ibid.*, iv. 904 ff.).

the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. And he 6
had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a javelin of brass
between his shoulders. And the staff of his spear was 7
like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six
hundred shekels of iron: and his shield-bearer went
before him. And he stood and cried unto the armies of 8
Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set
your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye
servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let
him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, 9
and kill me, then will we be your servants: but if
I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our
servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy 10
the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we
may fight together. And when Saul and all Israel heard 11
those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and
greatly afraid.

[Z] Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of 12
Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had
eight sons: and the man was an old man in the days of
Saul, stricken *in years* among men. And the three 13

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7. like a weaver's beam: rather, 'a weaver's shaft' or leash-rod, for which the curious student is referred to the special investigation of this obscure term in the article 'Weaving' (Kennedy), *EBi.*, iv. 5285.

11. At this point, according to the original text, David, Saul's armourbearer, steps forward and accepts the challenge (verse 32).

xvii. 12–31. *Another account of David's appearance on the scene.* The reasons for regarding these verses as forming no part of the original text of the compiler of Samuel have been given above.

12. This verse has all the appearance of having once been the commencement of an independent narrative. W. R. Smith conjectures that it read originally: 'And there was a man, an Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Jesse' (cf. i. 1, ix. 1).

eldest sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle:
and the names of his three sons that went to the battle
were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab,
14 and the third Shammah. And David was the youngest:
15 and the three eldest followed Saul. Now David went to
and fro from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem.
16 And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and
presented himself forty days.

17 And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy
brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten
loaves, and carry *them* quickly to the camp to thy
18 brethren; and bring these ten cheeses unto the captain
of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and
19 take their pledge. Now Saul, and they, and all the men
of Israel, were in the vale of Elah, fighting with the
20 Philistines. And David rose up early in the morning,
and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as
Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the place
of the wagons, as the host which was going forth to the
21 fight shouted for the battle. And Israel and the Philis-
22 tines put the battle in array, army against army. And
David left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the
baggage, and ran to the army, and came and saluted his

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15. We have here clearly the hand of a harmonizer, who sought to explain the absence of Saul's armourbearer from the camp by suggesting that David divided his time between the court and his father's farm.

16. A legendary heightening of the Philistine's truculence of which the older narrative knows nothing, and which, moreover, here appears too early in this narrative.

18. captain of their thousand: see on viii. 12.

take their pledge: some token which David could show to their father as proof that they were alive and well.

20. the place of the wagons: also xxvi. 5, 7; the original is probably a military term for the camp. R.V. marg. gives 'barricade'; others 'entrenchment' (BDB., *Heb. Lex.*).

brethren. And as he talked with them, behold, there 23
came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath
by name, out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spake
according to the same words: and David heard them.
And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled 24
from him, and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel 25
said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to
defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man
who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great
riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his
father's house free in Israel. And David spake to the 26
men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to
the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the
reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised
Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living
God? And the people answered him after this manner, 27
saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.
And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto 28
the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David,
and he said, Why art thou come down? and with whom
hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know
thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou
art come down that thou mightest see the battle. And 29

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23. spake according to the same words: the terms of the challenge have been omitted, as they were already given in 8 ff. (from M).

25. free in Israel: i.e. from all dues in kind or money, from unpaid labour (see on 2 Sam. xx. 24), &c.

26. the living God: this Divine name is supposed to belong to the Deuteronomic age (Deut. v. 25; Jer. x. 10, xxiii. 36). Cf. verse 36 below.

28. I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart: the writer of these words cannot have been acquainted with the scene depicted in xvi. 12 f., the solemn anointing of David 'in the midst of his brethren.' No Hebrew, least of all a brother, could thus have spoken to 'the LORD's anointed.'

David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?
30 And he turned away from him toward another, and spake
after the same manner: and the people answered him
31 again after the former manner. And when the words
were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them
32 before Saul; and he sent for him. [**M**] And David
said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him;
33 thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And
Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this
Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth,
34 and he a man of war from his youth. And David said
unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep; and when
there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the
35 flock, I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered
it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me,

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31. and he sent for him: a paraphrase rather than a translation of the original 'and he took him.' Lucian's recension of the later Greek text has 'and they took him and brought him to Saul,' which at least gives sense. But the fact is that the interpolated narrative here breaks off abruptly, and we do not know how the verse really ended.

xvii. 32–54. *David accepts the challenge and slays the champion.* The original narrative, which was dropped at verse 11, is now resumed. David, who was in the camp from the first, where indeed he had a tent assigned to him (verse 54), hears the Philistine's challenge (verses 8 ff.) and at once—note the contrast in verse 16—accepts it. The close connexion between verses 11 and 32 is self-evident.

33. thou art but a youth: the assumed discrepancy between this statement and the data of xvi. 18, of which so much has been made, was there shown to be illusory. 'An armourbearer was not a full warrior, but a sort of page or apprentice in arms' (*OTJC.*^{2}, 431 f.).

34. David had proved his courage in another school. Common sense and grammar alike require the rendering of R. V. as compared with A. V. We have not the record of a single adventure but of many. A still closer reproduction of the text would run thus: 'when a lion—or (it might be) a bear—used to come out, and take a lamb,' &c. For the hardships of a shepherd's life, see Gen. xxxi. 39 ff., and cf. Amos iii. 12.

I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.
Thy servant smote both the lion and the bear: and this 36
uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing
he hath defied the armies of the living God. And David 37
said, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the
lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me
out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto
David, Go, and the LORD shall be with thee. And Saul 38
clad David with his apparel, and he put an helmet of
brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of
mail. And David girded his sword upon his apparel, 39
and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And
David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have
not proved them. And David put them off him. And 40
he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth
stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's
bag which he had, even in his scrip; and his sling was
in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. And 41

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36. The last clause is probably an addition from verse 26 (see there), the verse originally ending with 'one of them.' The LXX text is still fuller.

37. The author now begins to lead up to the religious lesson of the story. Saul wishes to give the youthful champion the best equipment in all the camp, his own. But this only serves to bring into stronger relief the intention of Him 'who saveth not with sword and spear' (verse 47).

38. And Saul clad David with his apparel: rather, as A.V., 'with his armour,' as may be seen from xviii. 4, where the various items are enumerated. Cf. 2 Sam. xx. 8, Joab's 'apparel of war.' The last clause, accordingly, is unnecessary and is wanting in LXX.

39. he assayed to go: i. e. he tried unsuccessfully to go, for the weight of the unaccustomed armour impeded his movements.

40. his scrip: a better order would be: 'and put them in his scrip (the shepherd's bag which he had);' the words within parentheses being a gloss on the unique word (*yalkut*) rendered 'scrip.'

41. With verse 50, no part of the true text (see above). The

the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and
42 the man that bare the shield went before him. And
when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he
disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and
43 withal of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said
unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with
staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.
44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and
I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the
45 beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine,
Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and
with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of the
LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which
46 thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee
into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine
head from off thee; and I will give the carcases of the
host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air,
and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth
47 may know that there is a God in Israel: and that all
this assembly may know that the LORD saveth not with
sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he
48 will give you into our hand. And it came to pass, when
the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet

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next verse should end with 'youth,' the rest being generally regarded as an irrelevant expansion derived from xvi. 12.

45. the God of the armies of Israel: for the importance of this definition of Yahweh Sebaoth (the LORD of hosts) for the original significance of this Divine title, see on i. 3. Its occurrence here seems to tell in favour of the derivation of the main stock of this chapter from the early source M. From the time of Amos onwards Yahweh Ṣebaoth had another and higher significance, as explained above (p. 37).

46 f. Cheyne has rightly seen that these two verses have been added by a 'later writer of the post-Deuteronomic period to bring the lesson of the tale into clearer view.'. . Nowhere else outside of the N.T. does the message of encouragement to the humble and

David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to
meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, 49
and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the
Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his
forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth. So 50
David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with
a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but
there was no sword in the hand of David. Then David 51
ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword,
and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and
cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines
saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the 52
men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and
pursued the Philistines, until thou comest to Gai, and to
the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines
fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and
unto Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from 53
chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their
camp. And David took the head of the Philistine, and 54
brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his
tent.

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exhortation to the weak in faith receive so affecting, so inspiring an expression' (see for details his article 'Goliath,' *EBi.* ii. 1755, and *Aids to the devout Study of Criticism*, 116 ff.).

52. Gai: a slip for Gath, for which and for Ekron see on v. 8 ff. The rest of the verse is corrupt. Nowack reads: 'And the wounded of the Philistines fell down even in the gateways' (note R. V. marg.). What follows appears to be a gloss from the preceding sentence.

54. and brought it to Jerusalem: a curious anachronism, since David's future capital was still in the hands of the Jebusites. Cheyne conjectures 'to Saul.'

he put his armour in his tent: a sentence which is fatal to the unity of the chapter, but which affords a striking confirmation of the analysis here advocated, which sees in xvii. 1 ff. the natural sequence of xvi. 14-23 (cf. on 32 ff., p. 126). Goliath's sword is found somewhat later at Nob (xxi. 9).

55 [Z] And when Saul saw David go forth against the
Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host,
Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As
56 thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said,
57 Inquire thou whose son the stripling is. And as David
returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took
him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the
58 Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son
art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the
18 son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite. And it came
to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul,
that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David,
2 and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul
took him that day, and would let him go no more home
3 to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made
a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.
4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon
him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his
5 sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. And David

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xvii. 55–xviii. 5. *David's* (*second*) *introduction to Saul and his advancement at court.* A further extract from the parallel narrative beginning verse 12, and, as we have seen, no part of the original text, according to which David is already a *persona grata* at court (xvi. 21). No harmonistic ingenuity has yet succeeded in reconciling the two accounts of David's introduction. It is satisfactory to know that perhaps the most striking discrepancy as to a matter of fact to be found in the historical books cannot be laid at the door of the original compiler of Samuel.

3. Jonathan and David enter into a covenant of blood-brotherhood, for which see W. R. Smith, *Rel. Sem.*^{2}, 314 f., and especially Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant*, *passim*. In xx. 8 it is called 'a covenant of Yahweh.' The mutual affection of these two, so disinterested on Jonathan's part, and so nobly requited on David's, has become for all time the type of the generous and enduring friendships of youth.

4. his apparel: rather, 'his armour,' see on xvii. 38. The commentators recall the exchange of arms between Glaucus and Diomede in the *Iliad* (vi. 230 ff.).

went out whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

[**M**] And it came to pass as they came, when David 6
returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the
women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and
dancing, to meet king Saul, with timbrels, with joy, and
with instruments of music. And the women sang one to 7
another in their play, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands.

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5. The arrangement of the clauses in Lucian's text is preferable: 'And Saul set him over the men of war, and David went out and came in (a common idiom for military duty, xxix. 6, and verses 13, 16 below), and whithersoever Saul sent him he behaved himself wisely; and it was good,' &c.

behaved himself wisely: rather, 'was successful'; the original 'expresses not success alone, but success as the result of wise provision' (Driver).

(*e*) xviii. 6–30. *Saul becomes jealous of David's popularity, but gives him his daughter Michal in marriage.*

The relation of the incidents in this section to each other and to the foregoing is difficult to trace. But the difficulties are in great measure removed if, as in the previous chapter, we accept as the original text of Samuel the shorter form given by codex B of the LXX, which omits the following verses and parts of verses: xviii. 6^a (to 'Philistine'), the first and last clauses of 8, 10, 11, 12 (all after 'David'), 17–19, 21^b, 29^b, 30. By the excision of these accretions a much more intelligible and psychologically consistent narrative is obtained, which may be assigned in the main to M. The sign Z (later addition) has only been inserted before the larger accretions, verses 10 f., 17 ff. (see above).

6 f. The text of B opens thus: 'And the dancing women came out,' &c. At first sight the poetical distich which follows—cited again in xxi. 11, xxix. 5—appears inappropriate, and would be more in place at a somewhat later stage of David's career, e.g. after xix. 8. On the other hand, the couplet may have been a popular mode of comparing the merits of rival leaders, and as such employed as stated in the expanded form of 6^a.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands:
9 and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

10 [Z] And it came to pass on the morrow, that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as he did day by day: and Saul had his
11 spear in his hand. And Saul cast the spear; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall. And David avoided
12 out of his presence twice. [**M**] And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed
13 from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and
14 came in before the people. And David behaved himself
15 wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him. And when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he

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8. The premature hint as to the royal succession in the last clause belongs to the inserted matter.

9. Saul eyed David: looked on him with envy and suspicion.

10 f. These intrusive verses place the climax of Saul's jealousy too early (see on verse 12).

and he prophesied: rather, 'he raved,' was in a state of frenzy; cf. x. 5.

12 f. And Saul was afraid of David, and removed him from him: so the true text (B). The psychologically accurate picture, given by the shorter text, of the gradual growth of Saul's enmity to David has often been noted. Here Saul is 'afraid of David,' in verse 15 he 'stands in awe of him,' while in verse 29 he is 'yet more afraid,' and ultimately gives orders for his assassination (xix. 1), if this be the continuation of xviii. 29.

went out and came in: see on verse 5. This promotion to the command of 'a thousand' (for which see on viii. 12) is more credible than the parallel statement of verse 5, which seems to represent David as already commander-in-chief. Saul's motive was doubtless the same that we find expressed in verses 17, 21, and 25.

stood in awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved 16
David; for he went out and came in before them.

[Z] And Saul said to David, Behold, my elder daughter 17
Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant
for me, and fight the LORD's battles. For Saul said, Let
not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the
Philistines be upon him. And David said unto Saul, 18
Who am I, and what is my life, *or* my father's family in
Israel, that I should be son in law to the king? But it 19
came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter
should have been given to David, that she was given
unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife. [M] And Michal 20
Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the
thing pleased him. And Saul said, I will give him her, 21
that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the

17–19. A perplexing passage, which, however, is no part of the original text, and may be set down as an unhistorical variant of verses 20 ff.

17. fight the LORD'S battles (also xxv. 28): the battles of His people are Yahweh's battles, hence the title of the poetical work cited Num. xxi. 14, 'the book of the battles of Yahweh.' Down to the reign of David, Yahweh, as visibly represented by the ark, frequently—at first, no doubt, invariably—took the field with the consecrated warriors.

18. what is my life: render, as R. V. marg., 'who are my kinsfolk,' a rare word denoting 'a group of families united by blood-ties,' as explained by the following gloss 'my father's clan.' Cf. 2 Sam. vii. 18.

19. Adriel the Meholathite: a native of Abel-meholah, in the Jordan valley near Beth-shan, the native place of Elisha (1 Kings xix. 16). The tragic fate of the five sons of this union is related 2 Sam. xxi. 8 ff., where for 'Michal' read, with LXX, 'Merab.'

xviii. 20–29. *Michal is given in marriage to David.*

21. that she may be a snare to him: a metaphor taken from fowling, with no moral connotation here. The meaning of the reference to the Philistines, couched in the same terms as the doublet in verse 17, is disclosed in verse 25. The latter part of the verse, wanting in B, is a mere harmonistic addition.

Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to
David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law a second
22 time. And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king
hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now
23 therefore be the king's son in law. And Saul's servants
spake those words in the ears of David. And David said,
Seemeth it to you a light thing to be the king's son in law,
24 seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed? And
the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner
25 spake David. And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David,
The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's
enemies. Now Saul thought to make David fall by the
26 hand of the Philistines. And when his servants told
David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's
27 son in law. And the days were not expired; and David
arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he
might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him
28 Michal his daughter to wife. And Saul saw and knew

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23. I am a poor man: and therefore unable to pay the large dowry which would be expected for a princess.

25. dowry (Heb. *mōhar*): the price in money, in cattle, or, as here and in the case of Jacob, in special service rendered, which according to ancient custom was paid to the bride's father as compensation for the loss to the family and tribe of a valuable member. For a dowry (R. V. 'portion') in the modern sense, see 1 Kings ix. 16. The last clause discloses Saul's real motive in selecting this particular form of dowry, which, though repellent to modern sensibilities, had its analogies in contemporary Egyptian custom.

27. David spontaneously doubles the stipulated dowry. The Greek text, however, reads 'one hundred,' which accords with David's own statement, 2 Sam. iii. 14.

28 f. The more concise and intelligible text of codex B is here

that the LORD was with David; and Michal Saul's daughter loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid 29
of David; [Z] and Saul was David's enemy continually.

Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it 30
came to pass, as often as they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

[**T**] And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all **19**

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generally preferred: 'And Saul saw that the LORD was with David, and that all Israel loved him, and he was yet more afraid of David.' All that follows, to the end of the chapter, is extraneous matter.

(*f*) xix. 1—xx. 42. *Saul's increasing enmity compels David to flee the court. Jonathan's loyalty to David.*

The difficulties, literary and historical, raised by this section are, frankly, insuperable. The text also is in considerable disorder, although the Greek version now resumes its normal relation to the Hebrew. If Jonathan was personally urged by his father to compass David's death (xix. 1), how could he be ignorant of Saul's design (cf. xix. 2 with xx. 2)? Notwithstanding Saul's determined attempt to seize David, who barely escapes with his life (xix. 11 ff.), in the following chapter the latter is still at court devising means to ascertain Saul's feelings towards him (xx. 5 ff.). Further, in xix. 18-24, we are told of the origin of a popular saying, of which our oldest source has already given another and more credible explanation (x. 10 ff.). This meeting of Samuel and Saul, moreover, contradicts the previous statement, xv. 35^a. These are but a few of the difficulties which have made this period of David's life the despair of historical critics, to whose works the student is referred for further details.

On one point only is there general agreement, namely that the passage xix. 18-24 is late and unhistorical. There is considerable agreement, also, that the main stream of the narrative in ch. xx belongs to the early source M (Budde's J), with various parts of which it shows linguistic points of contact (see notes). Beyond this all is conjecture. If, however, we adopt ch. xx as, in the main, M's version of this crisis in David's life, the story of Michal's stratagem (xix. 11-17) will have come from another source. Verses 1-7 may also be a parallel version of Jonathan's part as mediator in ch. xx. Without a doubt, such topics as Saul's jealousy on the one hand, Jonathan's friendship and Michal's

2 his servants, that they should slay David. But Jonathan
Saul's son delighted much in David. And Jonathan told
David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to slay thee: now
therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself in the morning,
3 and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: and I will
go out and stand beside my father in the field where
thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee;
4 and if I see aught, I will tell thee. And Jonathan spake
good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him,
Let not the king sin against his servant, against David;
because he hath not sinned against thee, and because
5 his works have been to thee-ward very good: for he put
his life in his hand, and smote the Philistine, and the
LORD wrought a great victory for all Israel: thou sawest
it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against
6 innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? And
Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul
sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be put to death.

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affection on the other, were favourite themes of the popular traditions of a later time. The symbol T has accordingly been adopted for such elements of tradition as the compiler may be supposed to have incorporated in his book, as distinguished from such post-redactional passages as xix. 18 ff., denoted throughout by Z.

The story, accordingly, as told by our oldest authority (M) may have run somewhat as follows. The failure of Saul's plans for removing David (xviii. 25), and the latter's growing popularity with the people (xviii. 28 LXX), so fanned the flame of the royal jealousy that further successes of David against the Philistines brought on an access of frenzy, which issued in Saul personally attempting the life of his son-in-law (xix. 8–10). On this David has recourse to Jonathan, by whose connivance Saul's fixed determination to put David to death is made so patent that David has no alternative but to flee the court and seek the aid of the priests at Nob (xx. 1—xxi. 1).

xix. 1–7. *Temporary reconciliation of Saul and David.* The fact that the representation given in ch. xx. 1 ff. of the relations between Saul and David on the one hand, and between David and Jonathan on the other, seems to leave no room for this earlier

And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him 7
all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul,
and he was in his presence, as beforetime.

[**M**] And there was war again: and David went out, 8
and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a
great slaughter; and they fled before him. And an evil 9
spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his
house with his spear in his hand; and David played with
his hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the 10
wall with the spear; but he slipped away out of Saul's
presence, and he smote the spear into the wall: and
David fled, and escaped that night. [**T**] And Saul sent 11
messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to
slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told
him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow
thou shalt be slain. So Michal let David down through 12
the window: and he went, and fled, and escaped. And 13
Michal took the teraphim, and laid it in the bed, and

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attempt at reconciliation has led us to ascribe this passage to an independent source. Unless verses 2 f. are to be taken as redactional, the whole may have arisen as a variant of ch. xx (cf. xx. 19, 35).

8-10. Probably the original continuation of xviii. 29ª. Since the late variant xviii. 10 f. is no part of the true text, we have here the first mention of a personal attack on David on the part of Saul. The last two words of verse 11 'that night' belong to the next episode (so LXX).

xix. 11-17. *Michal's stratagem enables David to escape.* H. P. Smith seeks to rescue this dramatic incident for our oldest source by the conjecture that it originally followed xviii. 27. Saul sought to entrap David on his wedding night! But this attribution results in ch. xx, which undoubtedly contains ancient material (see below), being relegated to a source by itself (H. P. Smith, *Inter. Crit. Comm.*, p. xxv).

13. the teraphim: though plural in form, here applied to a single object. This is the classical passage for the conclusion that these mysterious images were, in whole or in part, of human form, see on xv. 23.

put a pillow of goats' *hair* at the head thereof, and covered
14 it with the clothes. And when Saul sent messengers to
15 take David, she said, He is sick. And Saul sent the
messengers to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in
16 the bed, that I may slay him. And when the messengers
came in, behold, the teraphim was in the bed, with the
17 pillow of goats' *hair* at the head thereof. And Saul said
unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me thus, and let
mine enemy go, that he is escaped? And Michal answered
Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill
thee?

18 [Z] Now David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel
to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him.
19 And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it
was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in
20 Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David: and
when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying,
and Samuel standing as head over them, the spirit of

---

a pillow of goats' hair: the precise meaning of the word rendered 'pillow' is unknown. The margin gives 'quilt' or 'network.' The last is suggested by the etymology, and a mosquito curtain (see Judith x. 21) of hair netting, covering and so obscuring the features, may be intended.

xix. 18–24. *David takes refuge with Samuel at Ramah.* In addition to the arguments for the late date and questionable historicity of this passage given above, it may be added (*a*) that the portrait of Samuel as the head (verse 20) of a so-called 'school of the prophets'—such as we find in the story of Elisha, 2 Kings iv. 38 ff., vi. 1 ff.—is inconsistent with the historical notice of Samuel as living and working apart from the 'prophets' of his time (see on x. 5); (*b*) historical probability is in favour of David taking refuge with his kinsfolk in the south, a step vouched for by the narrative, xxi. 1 ff., xxii. 1.

18. in Naioth: add, with LXX, 'in Ramah,' as always in the sequel. The name remains a puzzle. It may denote the cloister in which the prophets lodged (cf. 2 Kings vi. 1 ff., and see Driver, *Notes, in loc.*).

God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also
prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other 21
messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent
messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied.
Then went he also to Ramah, and came to the great 22
well that is in Secu: and he asked and said, Where are
Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at
Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in 23
Ramah: and the spirit of God came upon him also, and
he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in
Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he 24
also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all
that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul
also among the prophets?

[**M**] And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came **20**
and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is
mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that
he seeketh my life? And he said unto him, God forbid; 2

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22. The Greek text is more intelligible: 'And Saul was exceeding angry, and went himself also to Ramah, and came to the well of the threshing-floor which is on the height,' the usual situation of the village threshing-floor.

23. he went thither: the sense requires 'he went from there' (LXX).

XX. 1–42. *David and Jonathan.*

In this chapter we have one of the most effective episodes of the book, taken in the main, as has been suggested above, from the early historical work which we have designated M. In the case of so popular a story, it is to be expected that various excrescences would gather round the original stock. The opening words are of course from the hand that inserted the Ramah episode.

1. what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin? The two substantives are practically synonymous in ordinary usage, but the root-ideas are somewhat different. The former (Heb. *'āwōn*), from a root meaning 'to go astray,' denotes strictly 'deviation from the right track, error' (Driver), the latter (*ḥattāth*) 'a missing of the mark,' a failure of duty to God or man.

thou shalt not die: behold, my father doeth nothing
either great or small, but that he discloseth it unto me:
and why should my father hide this thing from me? it
3 is not so. And David sware moreover, and said, Thy
father knoweth well that I have found grace in thine eyes;
and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be
grieved: but truly as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul
4 liveth, there is but a step between me and death. Then
said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth,
5 I will even do it for thee. And David said unto
Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow is the new moon, and I
should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me
go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day

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2. **he discloseth it unto me:** *lit.* 'uncovers my ear,' used of a communication between man and man as here (so verses 12 f.), as well as of a revelation from God to man (ix. 15), both chapters being, as we believe, from the same source.

3. **as thy soul liveth:** 'a pathetic periphrasis for the personal pronoun' (Driver), as much as 'by thy life.' Another instance of this double oath, by the life of Yahweh and the life of the person addressed, is found xxv. 26 (also M). For other forms in Samuel see on iii. 17, and cf. verse 13 below.

4. Jonathan's answer should probably take the form of a query, as in R.V. marg., to which David replies by unfolding a scheme for ascertaining Saul's intentions with regard to him.

5. **to-morrow is the new moon:** the day on which the new moon was first visible in Palestine was from the earliest times a religious festival of great importance. Like the Sabbath, with which it is frequently associated, it was a day of rest and worship. It was also, as we learn here, a day on which were held those religious rites by which the various sacral communities, clans and families, were bound together (verses 6, 29).

I should not fail to sit: preferable is the LXX reading, 'and I will not sit with the king at meat.' Verse 25 shows that David regularly sat, with Jonathan and Abner, at the king's table, and not merely on special occasions. The fact that the following day was new moon would give an air of plausibility to David's pretext.

unto the third day at even: read, 'until the evening.' The present ungrammatical text is due to a copyist who wished to

at even. If thy father miss me at all, then say, David 6
earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for it is the yearly sacrifice there for all the
family. If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have 7
peace: but if he be wroth, then know that evil is
determined by him. Therefore deal kindly with thy ser- 8
vant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant
of the LORD with thee: but if there be in me iniquity,
slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy
father? And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I 9
should at all know that evil were determined by my father
to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee? Then 10
said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me if perchance
thy father answer thee roughly? [T] And Jonathan said 11
unto David, Come and let us go out into the field. And
they went out both of them into the field.

And Jonathan said unto David, The LORD, the God 12
of Israel, *be witness*; when I have sounded my father

---

make David's proposal agree with Jonathan's (verse 19; cf. verse 12).

8. a covenant of the LORD: an expression found here only. Yahweh was the witness and guardian of all such covenants (verse 23). The covenant between Jonathan and David has been previously mentioned only in the inserted passage, xviii. 3, which shows that a later passage is not necessarily unhistorical.

9. Far be it from me: the same expression as is rendered 'God forbid,' verse 2, xiv. 45.

xx. 11–17. *Jonathan implores the mercy of David in view of future contingencies.*

There is a general consensus of critical opinion that these verses are a later addition to the main narrative. (1) There is no apparent reason for the sudden change of scene, 'into the field'; (2) the rôles of the actors are now reversed, Jonathan the powerful protector of the sections that precede and follow becoming the humble suppliant of verses 14–16. The whole seems intended to prepare the way for the incident of 2 Sam. ix. 1 ff. Verse 18, it will be noted, is the natural continuation of verse 10.

about this time to-morrow, *or* the third day, behold, if
there be good toward David, shall I not then send unto
13 thee, and disclose it unto thee? The LORD do so to
Jonathan, and more also, should it please my father to
do thee evil, if I disclose it not unto thee, and send thee
away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be
14 with thee, as he hath been with my father. And thou
shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of
15 the LORD, that I die not: but also thou shalt not cut
off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when
the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one
16 from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made a
covenant with the house of David, *saying*, And the LORD
17 shall require it at the hand of David's enemies. And
Jonathan caused David to swear again, for the love that

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12. **or the third day:** a harmonistic gloss, see on verse 5.

14–16. No one can fail to be touched by the pathos of these verses—the brave, noble-hearted Jonathan a suppliant of David's grace, as if coming events were already casting their shadow over his soul. The text requires some emendation which brings out more forcibly the earnestness and aim of Jonathan's appeal. 'Oh that while yet I live, oh that thou wouldest show me the kindness of Yahweh (see 2 Sam. ix. 2); but if I should die, oh that thou wouldest not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever. And when Yahweh hath cut off the enemies of David, every one from the face of the earth, should the name of Jonathan be destroyed by the house of David, then may Yahweh require it of David'—so essentially LXX, supported by the parallel in xxiv. 20 ff. The latter passage gives the key to the appeal before us. Jonathan here, like his father there, is represented as foreseeing the downfall of his house, and the succession of 'the house of David' to the throne. In view, therefore, of the barbarous oriental custom, vouched for in 1 Kings xv. 29, xvi. 11, and elsewhere, Jonathan prays that his 'name,' as continued in his descendants, may be spared by David and his successors, whom otherwise God will call to account.

17. Read, with LXX, 'And Jonathan sware yet again to David by his love toward him' (as R. V. marg.), i. e. he repeated the oath of verse 13.

he had to him: for he loved him as he loved his own
soul. [M] Then Jonathan said unto him, To-morrow is 18
the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy
seat will be empty. And when thou hast stayed three 19
days, thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place
where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in
hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel. And I will 20
shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot
at a mark. And, behold, I will send the lad, *saying*, Go, 21
find the arrows. If I say unto the lad, Behold, the
arrows are on this side of thee: take them, and come;
for there is peace to thee and no hurt, as the LORD
liveth. But if I say thus unto the boy, Behold, the 22
arrows are beyond thee: go thy way; for the LORD
hath sent thee away. And as touching the matter which 23
thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD is between
thee and me for ever.

So David hid himself in the field: and when the new 24
moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

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18. We now return to the main narrative in which Jonathan elaborates a scheme of communication with David in hiding.

19. thou shalt go down quickly: the text of this verse is corrupt; the Greek has here, 'thou wilt be greatly missed.'

when the business was in hand: *lit.* 'on the day of the deed'—probably another corruption; at least, there is no clue in our extant record to the deed in question. The marginal reference to xix. 2 is a mere makeshift.

by the stone Ezel: read, as emended with the help of LXX, 'by yonder mound' (see on verse 41).

20. Read, 'and on the third day I will shoot with arrows at the side thereof.'

21. take them, and come: the Revisers evidently took these words as addressed to David, but the singular pronoun (note the margin) shows that Jonathan proposed to shoot a single arrow as the signal (see verses 36 f.), and we should render: 'If I say . . . the arrow is on this side of thee, fetch it, then come thou (David), for there is peace,' &c.

xx. 24-42. *Saul's intention discovered and communicated to David.*

25 And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon the seat by the wall; and Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat by Saul's side: but David's place was empty.
26 Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean;
27 surely he is not clean. And it came to pass on the morrow after the new moon, *which was* the second *day*, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse
28 to meat, neither yesterday, nor to-day? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go
29 to Beth-lehem: and he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he is not
30 come unto the king's table. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame,

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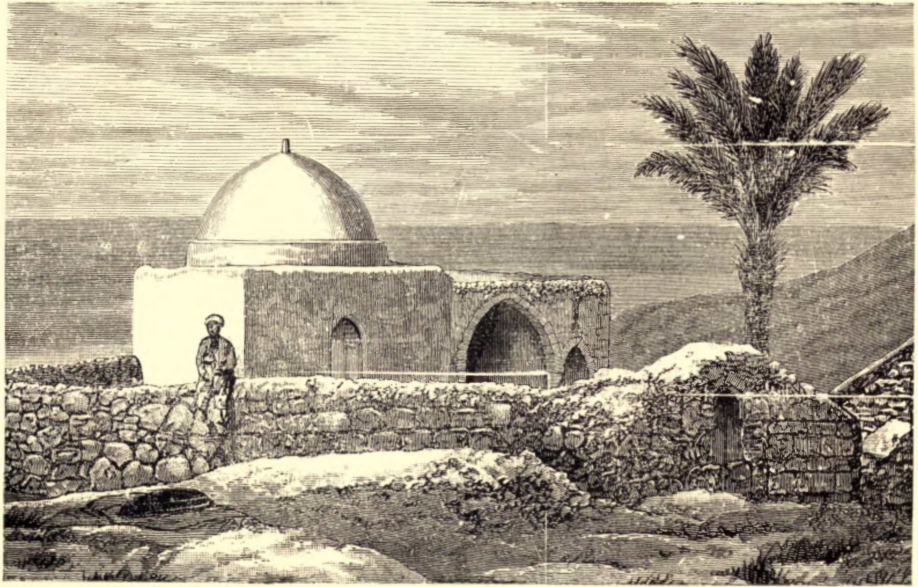
25. and Jonathan stood up: read, 'and Jonathan was in front' (LXX), in the seat opposite Saul. The other two places were occupied usually by the king's son-in-law, and his commander-in-chief. The more luxurious fashion of reclining at meals had not yet been introduced.

26. surely he is not clean: read, with LXX, 'for he hath not been cleansed.' Saul's modest reticence may be noted (see Lev. xv. 16; Deut. xxiii. 10). The passage is of interest as attesting the scrupulous regard, even in this early period, for ceremonial purity.

29. my brother: with LXX we should read 'my brethren,' as in the next clause. The festival was the annual reunion (verse 6) of the larger sacral community of the clan, not merely of David's immediate kinsfolk or 'father's house.'

30. son of a perverse rebellious woman: to curse a man's parents and ancestors generally is a familiar trait of the hasty Arab, but the sting of Saul's abuse lies in the insinuation that Jonathan was no son of his!



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SAMUEL'S TOMB

and unto the shame of thy mother's nakedness? For as 31
long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou
shalt not be stablished, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore
now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.
And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto 32
him, Wherefore should he be put to death? what hath
he done? And Saul cast his spear at him to smite him: 33
whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his
father to put David to death. So Jonathan arose from 34
the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second
day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because
his father had done him shame.

And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan 35
went out into the field at the time appointed with David,
and a little lad with him. And he said unto his lad, 36
Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. And as the
lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. And when the 37
lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan
had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not
the arrow beyond thee? And Jonathan cried after the 38
lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad
gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But 39
the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David

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31. Saul is now seen to be haunted by the fear that David's popularity with his countrymen would secure for him the succession to the throne. This was all the more probable since the principle of succession by primogeniture had not yet had an opportunity of establishing itself.

34. Since it was Jonathan himself, not David, to whom Saul 'had done shame,' it is better, with LXX (B), to omit 'for he was grieved for David.' His father's coarse and insulting speech is sufficient to account for Jonathan's 'fierce anger.'

37. Jonathan seems to have proceeded thus: he first shoots a few arrows, then orders his page to run and fetch them, and finally, while the boy is running, he shoots the signal arrow over the boy's head (note the margin), and further than the others.

40 knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his weapons unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city.
41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the South, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.
42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

21 Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest:

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41. out of a place **toward the South:** a characteristic specimen of the Revisers' deference to the traditional text. We must of course read with the LXX: 'David arose from beside the mound' (see on verse 19). Verses 40-42, however, are regarded by most commentators as 'an editorial expansion, pure and simple.' For the grounds see H. P. Smith, *in loc.*

B. 1 Sam. xxi-xxvi. *David's Flight from Court and his subsequent Adventures as an Outlaw Captain in the South.*

These six chapters relate the fortunes of David from the date of his final breach with Saul until he finds himself reduced, as a last resource, to take refuge with Saul's inveterate enemies the Philistines. The story consists of a number of separate incidents, the chronological succession of which it is no longer possible to determine with accuracy. Indeed, as will appear, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that here, as elsewhere in Samuel, we have more than once duplicate accounts of the same historical incident. We may break up this subdivision into four sections: (*a*) xxi-xxii, (*b*) xxiii-xxiv, (*c*) xxv, (*d*) xxvi, the headings of which are given below.

(*a*) xxi. 1—xxii. 23. *David's reception at the sanctuary of Nob and its consequences.*

Convinced of Saul's designs upon his life, David now flees the court, and makes first for the Benjamite sanctuary to which the priestly house of Eli must have removed after the destruction of Shiloh by the Philistines (see above, p. 67). With the exception of the post-redactional passage, xxi. 10-15, these two chapters form a connected narrative from the early source, M.

1. Nob lay somewhere close to Jerusalem on the north

and Ahimelech came to meet David trembling, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, 2
The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed the young men to such and such a place. Now therefore what is under 3
thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or whatsoever there is present. And the priest answered 4
David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is holy bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women. And David 5
answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days; when I came out, the vessels of the young men were

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(Isa. x. 32), and nearer than Anathoth, which was only two and a half miles from the capital. The head of the official priesthood was now **Ahimelech,** the son of Ahitub (xxii. 9), and therefore great-grandson of Eli, as we see from the genealogy, xiv. 3.

2. On Ahimelech expressing surprise that the king's son-in-law should travel unattended, David invents the excuse of a secret mission, alleging that the usual escort had been given a rendezvous elsewhere.

4. holy bread: bread hallowed (A. V.) or consecrated by being laid before Yahweh, hence termed in Hebrew 'presence-bread' (Exod. xxv. 30, R. V. marg.), the 'shewbread' of our English version (verse 6). The custom of placing loaves of sweet or unleavened bread on tables in the temples seems to have originated among the Babylonians, by whom also it was termed 'bread of the presence' (*KAT.*³ 600). In later times the presence-bread could only be eaten by the priests, and by them only within the sanctuary. Such stringency does not appear in the present narrative. It is enough that David and his men are ceremonially clean.

5. Owing chiefly to the antique religious conceptions involved, to the overloaded text, and to the ambiguity of the word variously rendered **vessels** (i.e. wallets, or bags), 'weapons,' 'bodies,' &c.,

holy, though it was but a common journey; how much
6 more then to-day shall their vessels be holy? So the priest
gave him holy *bread*: for there was no bread there but
the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to
7 put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. Now
a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day,
detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg the
Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to
8 Saul. And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there
not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have
neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me,

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the interpretation of this verse is beset with difficulties. David's reply may be rendered thus: 'Of a truth women have been taboo for us as on former occasions when I went forth (i. e. on military duty), and the wallets of the young men have been consecrated; how much more shall they be consecrated to-day, wallets (?) and all.' In justification of this interpretation it may be added: (1) that of the various taboos which had to be observed by 'the consecrated ones' (see on xiii. 9) in early times, none was more widely current than the sexual taboo, which meets us again in the episode of Uriah (2 Sam. xi. 11 ff.); (2) the consecration ceremony doubtless included the soldier's complete equipment, although we hear only of the anointing of the shield (2 Sam. i. 21). David, in short, asserts that by putting the consecrated bread into the wallets of his soldiers, these would be affected by the contagion of 'holiness' in the antique sense in which this term was then understood. See further W. R. Smith, *Rel. Sem.*², 455 f., and the special discussion by Schwally, *Semitische Kriegsalterthümer*, 60–66.

though it was but a common journey: these words seem to be a marginal remark of a reader pointing out that David was prevaricating in claiming that he was then on a consecrated military expedition.

7. detained before the LORD: a phrase from the same antique religious terminology, and from the same root as the word above rendered 'taboo.' It signifies 'under a taboo' in the sense of 'excluded from the cultus.' Doeg had been detained overnight in the sanctuary precincts, probably undergoing purification before being admitted to some act of worship.

the chiefest of the herdmen: a doubtful rendering: the LXX has 'Saul's muleherd.'

because the king's business required haste. And the 9
priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the vale of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.

[**Z**] And David arose, and fled that day for fear of 10
Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the 11
servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying,

Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands?

And David laid up these words in his heart, and was 12
sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And he changed 13
his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in

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9. If the contention that 'the Philistine' of ch. xvii has been erroneously identified with Goliath is correct (see p. 122), the name will be here due to a glossator (also xx. 10). For the inference to be drawn from the verse regarding the ephod, see on ii. 28. The custom of depositing military trophies in sanctuaries also obtained among the Philistines (v. 2, xxxi. 10).

xxi. 10-15. *David flees to Achish, king of Gath.*

This curious episode is now regarded as belonging to the same series of later additions in the style of the Midrash as xix. 18-24. Both historically and psychologically it is an inferior duplicate of xxvii. 1 f. (note the improbable designation of David in verse 11, and the undignified proceedings of verse 13). The motive of this legend was doubtless to remove the objection to David's unpatriotic action in ch. xxvii—which it was perhaps intended to supplant—by representing him as going alone to Achish and as quitting him as soon as possible.

11. David the king of the land: a curious anachronism of a kind characteristic of the edifying but unhistorical literature of the Midrash.

13. feigned himself mad: a policy frequently adopted in similar circumstances in the East, where lunatics are held in special dread as possessed by a powerful spirit.

their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and
14 let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said
Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad:
15 wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Do I lack
mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the
mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into
my house?

22 [M] David therefore departed thence, and escaped to
the cave of Adullam: and when his brethren and all his
father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.
2 And every one that was in distress, and every one that
was in debt, and every one that was discontented,
gathered themselves unto him; and he became captain
over them: and there were with him about four hundred
men.

3 And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he
said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my
mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I
4 know what God will do for me. And he brought them
before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all
5 the while that David was in the hold. And the prophet

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scrabbled: rather, with LXX, 'drummed' with his hands.

xxii. 1 f., the continuation of xx. 9; David escapes to Adullam and becomes the leader of a band of outlaws. The expression **cave of Adullam,** which has passed into a proverb among us, is due to a corruption of the similar Hebrew word for 'stronghold,' the 'hold' of verse 4. See also on 2 Sam. xxiii. 13 f. Adullam, in all probability, is the modern *Aid-el-Ma* on the edge of the Shephelah (G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.* 229), about twelve miles west by south of Beth-lehem. That the outlaw should be joined by his immediate relatives and the rest of his sept or **father's house** was a natural measure of precaution.

3 ff. David places his parents in the safe keeping of the king of Moab. His great-grandmother was a Moabitess according to the book which bears her name (Ruth iv. 21 f.).

Mizpeh of Moab has not been identified.

5. the prophet Gad appears again, 2 Sam. xxiv. 11, as

Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hereth.

And Saul heard that David was discovered, and the 6
men that were with him: now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him.
And Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, 7
Hear now ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you
all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds; that 8
all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that discloseth to me when my son maketh a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or discloseth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?
Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which stood by the 9
servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming
to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he 10

'David's seer,' and is mentioned by the Chronicler, along with Samuel and Nathan, as the author of a history of the period (1 Chron. xxix. 29).

in the hold: the Syriac reading 'in Mizpeh' is here generally preferred for the reason that 'the hold' of Adullam was itself in the land of Judah, as is plain from xxiii. 3. The **forest of Hereth** is unknown.

xxii. 6-23. *Saul takes a cruel revenge on the priests of Nob.*

6. in Ramah: read, as R. V. marg., 'on the height.' We are here introduced to Saul engaged in the administration of justice, seated like Deborah (Judges iv. 5) under a sacred tree on the moot-hill at Gibeah. **his servants** are the officers of state, the **spear in his hand** one of the insignia of royalty.

8. to lie in wait: read, with LXX, 'as an enemy'; so also verse 13.

9 f. In the opinion of the editors of the Psalter, Ps. lii commemorates this piece of tale-bearing.

10. he inquired of the LORD for him: a fact not mentioned

inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals,
11 and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. Then
the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of
Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were
12 in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. And
Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he
13 answered, Here I am, my lord. And Saul said unto
him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the
son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and
a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he
should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?
14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And
who among all thy servants is so faithful as David, which
is the king's son in law, and is taken into thy council,
15 and is honourable in thine house? Have I to-day
begun to inquire of God for him? be it far from me:
let not the king impute any thing unto his servant,
nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant
16 knoweth nothing of all this, less or more. And the
king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and
17 all thy father's house. And the king said unto the
guard that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests
of the Lord; because their hand also is with David, and
because they knew that he fled, and did not disclose it

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in the preceding chapter, but most natural in the circumstances, as may be seen from David's practice somewhat later (xxiii. 2 ff.; xxx. 8; see also verse 15 below).

14. and is taken into thy council: read, with LXX and the Targum: 'and is captain over thy bodyguard.' Ahimelech rebuts the charge of disloyalty brought against David before asserting the innocence of himself and his fellow priests.

17. the guard: *lit.* as marg., 'the runners,' see on viii. 11. Saul's charge of complicity is not borne out by anything in the previous narrative, and has just been expressly disclaimed by Ahimelech.

to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth
their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. And 18
the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the
priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell
upon the priests, and he slew on that day fourscore and
five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the 19
city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword,
both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen
and asses and sheep, with the edge of the sword. And 20
one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named
Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. And Abiathar 21
told David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests. And 22
David said unto Abiathar, I knew on that day, when
Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell
Saul: I have occasioned *the death* of all the persons of

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18. that did wear a linen ephod (*ephōd bad*): this, as we know, was a distinctive item of the priestly dress (see on ii. 18). But in this case the word for 'linen' (*bad*) is wanting in the Greek text, and that rendered 'wear' always means 'to lift up, carry,' &c.; accordingly we must here render 'he slew on that day eighty-five ephod-bearing men,' i. e. priests of full status, each qualified to give an oracle by consulting the ephod. This was one of the three prerogatives of the priesthood enumerated ii. 28, where see note on the ephod.

20. Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, who had probably been left in charge of the sanctuary, escapes from the massacre at Nob, carrying with him the sacred image (see xxiii. 6). He naturally took refuge at Adullam (see on xxiii. 2) with David, whom he accompanied in his subsequent wanderings, and by whom he was afterwards appointed joint custodian of the Ark. Espousing the cause of Adonijah in the matter of the disputed succession, he was banished by Solomon to his estate at Anathoth (1 Kings ii. 26). Mention may here be made of Duhm's attractive conjecture that to Abiathar or one of his family we owe the court and family history of David preserved in 2 Sam. ix-xx (our C), which may carry with it the authorship of the historical document (M) we are now following (see Introd., sect. iv). There can be no doubt that David's cause was greatly strengthened, now and afterwards, by the support of the only surviving representative of the most influential priestly family in Israel.

23 thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for
he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: for with me
thou shalt be in safeguard.

23 And they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines
are fighting against Keilah, and they rob the threshing-
2 floors. Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying,
Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord
said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save
3 Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we
be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we go
4 to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? Then
David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord
answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I
5 will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. And David

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23. he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life. The context requires the suffixes to be transposed; read, 'he that seeketh thy life seeketh my life,' a sentiment which reveals the heart of one who, more than any other in Hebrew history, had the power of attaching men, in self-sacrificing devotion, to himself.

(*b*) xxiii–xxiv. *David relieves Keilah and spares Saul's life.* The first of David's exploits as captain of a band of freelances was his rescue of a frontier town of Judah from imminent capture by the Philistines (xxiii. 1–13). David has still his head quarters in the fort of Adullam, and the season is midsummer.

1. Keilah: the modern *Kilah*, some three miles south of Adullam. It is mentioned in the Amarna correspondence, *c.* 1400 B.C.

2. David inquired of the LORD: the standing formula for consulting the sacred oracle. Considerable light is thrown on the method of procedure by the narratives of this chapter and of xxx. 7 f. A succession of questions was apparently put to the oracle, each of which admitted of being answered by a simple 'yes' or 'no' according to the lot, Urim or Thummim, which was cast (see further the note on xiv. 41). The fact that no mention is made in this verse of the oracular ephod seems to have struck an early reader, who added in his margin the note which now stands in the text as verse 6 (but without the words 'to Keilah'). This note explains that Abiathar had brought the ephod with him when he fled to David, which he did while the latter was still at Adullam.

and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and slew them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of 6
Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down
with an ephod in his hand. And it was told Saul that 7
David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath
delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by
entering into a town that hath gates and bars. And 8
Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to
Keilah, to besiege David and his men. And David knew 9
that Saul devised mischief against him; and he said to
Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. Then said 10
David, O LORD, the God of Israel, thy servant hath
surely heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to
destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah 11
deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as
thy servant hath heard? O LORD, the God of Israel, I
beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He
will come down. Then said David, Will the men of 12
Keilah deliver up me and my men into the hand of
Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up.
Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, 13
arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever

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xxiii. 7-13. *Saul plans to entrap David at Keilah.*

11. In the present text the first query has inadvertently come in from the following verse. David's first question to the oracle was: 'Will Saul come down?' Only when this question was answered in the affirmative was the other in place.

13. about six hundred. David's following has considerably increased in the presumably short interval since xxii. 2. The numbers henceforth remain stationary (xxv. 13, xxvii. 2).

and went whithersoever they could go: rather, 'they went whithersoever they went,' a Semitic idiom 'employed where either

they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth.
14 And David abode in the wilderness in the strong holds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him
15 not into his hand. [T] And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilder-
16 ness of Ziph in the wood. And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened
17 his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee;

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the means or the desire to be more explicit does not exist' (Driver). Cf. 2 Sam. xv. 20; 1 Kings viii. 1, &c. The phrase aptly describes the hand-to-mouth life of the highland freebooter, here to-day and away to-morrow.

14. A somewhat overloaded summary of David's wanderings subsequent to the relief of Keilah. His brush with the Philistines had now made Adullam, which lay on their frontier, too hot for him, a fact which throws the ingratitude of the men of Keilah into strong relief.

xxiii. 15-18. *David and Jonathan renew their covenant of friendship* (perhaps from the same hand as xx. 12 ff.; see below).

15. And David saw, &c.: read, by a slight change, 'And David was afraid because Saul,' &c., as implied in verses 16 f.

the wilderness of Ziph stretched north-east of Ziph, the modern *Tell Zif*—about four miles south by east of Hebron—towards the Dead Sea.

in the wood: read here and verses 18 f. 'in Horesh,' as margin, or better, 'in Horeshah,' perhaps the modern *Horeisa* (Conder), to the south-east of Ziph. A graphic description of this region, in which lay 'Maon, Ziph and the Judaean Carmel, with the farms of Nabal on which David and his men, like the Bedouin of to-day, levied blackmail,' will be found in G. A. Smith's *Hist. Geog.*, 306 f.

17. thou shalt be king over Israel, &c. Jonathan here gives definite expression to the conviction which we found to underly xx. 14 ff. With characteristic self-sacrifice he is content to claim the second place. Unfortunately it is extremely doubtful if these anticipations of David's succession can be historically substantiated. To the critical historian they appear rather as the unconscious

and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two 18
made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in
the wood, and Jonathan went to his house. Then came 19
up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not
David hide himself with us in the strong holds in the
wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of
the desert? Now therefore, O king, come down, accord- 20
ing to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our
part shall be to deliver him up into the king's hand.
And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have 21
had compassion on me. Go, I pray you, make yet more 22
sure, and know and see his place where his haunt is, *and*

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creation of a later generation, which loved thus to find anticipated the future of its favourite hero. Cf. xxiv. 20.

xxiii. 19—xxiv. 22. *David pursued by Saul, whose life he spares.* 'Perhaps in the whole O.T.,' remarks Cornill (*Einleitung*, 114), 'there is no more significant example of a doublet than xxiii. 19—xxiv. 23 compared with xxvi, in all essential points the same story, only in other words and with a somewhat different setting.' That we have here two parallel versions of the same incident is the all but unanimous verdict of modern scholars. The only question is as to which of the two is the older and therefore presumably the more accurate reflection of the actual facts. The balance of probability, in the opinion of most, is in favour of ch. xxvi. The evidence has been clearly and succinctly stated by Löhr (*Samuel*, xlv) thus: (*a*) the precise statement as to David's companions in xxvi. 6 compared with the indefiniteness of 'David and his men' in xxiv. 3 f.; (*b*) the manner in which Saul falls into David's hands (cf. xxvi. 7 ff., with its savour of ancient heroism, with xxiv. 3); (*c*) the antique religious conception of xxvi. 19, over against which may be set the content of xxiv. 20 f. suggesting affinity with such later passages as xx. 15 f., xxiii. 17, &c. See also on xxiv. 16 ff. below. A list of the more striking resemblances between the two narratives is given by Driver, *LOT.*⁶, 181. To M, therefore, we shall assign ch. xxvi, to T the section now before us.

19. Cf. the parallel introduction xxvi. 1. The verse seems overloaded at the end, and probably ended with 'in Horeshah' (R.V. 'the wood,' see verse 15). The rest has come in from xxvi. 1, where see notes.

22. know . . . where his haunt is. A probable emendation (see

who hath seen him there: for it is told me that he dealeth
23 very subtilly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all
the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye
again to me of a certainty, and I will go with you: and
it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will
24 search him out among all the thousands of Judah. And
they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David
and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the
25 Arabah on the south of the desert. And Saul and his
men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore
he came down to the rock, and abode in the
wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he
26 pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. And
Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and
his men on that side of the mountain: and David made
haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men
compassed David and his men round about to take them.
27 But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste
thee, and come; for the Philistines have made a raid upon
28 the land. So Saul returned from pursuing after David,
and went against the Philistines: therefore they called
29 that place Sela-hammahlekoth. And David went up from
thence, and dwelt in the strong holds of En-gedi.

Driver) gives the more graphic reading: 'ascertain and mark where his fleeting foot may be' (cf. margin).

24. the wilderness of Maon lies east of the modern *Ma'in* (a place a little beyond Carmel and about four miles south of Ziph), and is here described as **in the Arabah on the south of the desert.** The Arabah is the standing designation of 'the deep valley running north and south of the Dead Sea' (Deut. i. 1, Revisers' note).

25. to the rock, and abode, &c.: read, with LXX, 'to the rock which is in the wilderness of Maon.' David was already abiding there (verse 24). The rock is doubtless the same that we meet with again in verse 28.

29. En-gedi: 'kid's fountain,' the well-known oasis on the

And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from **24**
following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying,
Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi. Then 2
Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and
went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the
wild goats. And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, 3
where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet.
Now David and his men were abiding in the innermost
parts of the cave. And the men of David said unto him, 4
Behold, the day of which the LORD said unto thee,
Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, and
thou shalt do to him as it shall seem good unto thee.
Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe
privily. And it came to pass afterward, that David's 5
heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.
And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I 6
should do this thing unto my lord, the LORD'S anointed,
to put forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the

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western shore of the Dead Sea, which still bears the name (*Ain Jidy*).

xxiv. 3. 'The sheepfolds to which Saul came were possibly caves with a rough stone wall about the entrance, such as are still found in the Wilderness of Judah' (H. P. Smith). Into one such cave Saul enters alone to relieve himself; the same euphemism is found in Judges iii. 24.

4–7. There is a want of logical sequence in these verses (note, for example, that David's asseveration in verse 6 comes too late) which has led to a generally accepted transposition in this order: 4^a, 6, 7^a, 4^b, 5, 7^b. So read, the passage represents David's men as urging him, on the strength of an unrecorded oracle, to take the persecutor's life forthwith (4^a); David is indignant at the suggestion of such an act of sacrilege (6, 7^a); but in order to have tangible proof that he had really had the king in his power, he creeps stealthily forward and cuts off the skirt of his robe (4^b). Over even this milder form of *lèse-majesté* David is conscience-stricken (5), and Saul is quietly allowed to rejoin his men.

6. the LORD'S anointed: see on x. 1.

7 LORD's anointed. So David checked his men with these
words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. And
Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.
8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and
cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when
Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to
9 the earth, and did obeisance. And David said to Saul,
Wherefore hearkenest thou to men's words, saying,
10 Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day
thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered
thee to-day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade
me kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said,
I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he
11 is the LORD's anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea,
see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut
off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou
and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in
mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee, though
12 thou huntest after my soul to take it. The LORD judge
between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee:
13 but mine hand shall not be upon thee. As saith the
proverb of the ancients, Out of the wicked cometh forth
wickedness: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.
14 After whom is the king of Israel come out? after
whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.

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9 ff. David protests and proves his innocence of all desire to seek the king's hurt. Nay, on the contrary, he has requited him good for evil (11, end). God Himself is Judge between them, and to Him David commits his cause.

13. the proverb of the ancients here put into David's mouth, with its suggestion that Saul's misdeeds would recoil upon his own head (cf. xxv. 39), is so utterly at variance with the fine spirit of deference and magnanimity which breathes through David's previous remarks, that it is set down by all the commentators as a marginal gloss.

The Lord therefore be judge, and give sentence between 15
me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver
me out of thine hand. And it came to pass, when 16
David had made an end of speaking these words unto
Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David?
And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to 17
David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast
rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto
thee evil. And thou hast declared this day how that 18
thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the
Lord had delivered me up into thine hand, thou killedst
me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him 19
go well away? wherefore the Lord reward thee good
for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, 20
behold, I know that thou shalt surely be king, and that
the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.
Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord, that thou 21

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16. Here we have one of the most striking resemblances between the older (xxvi. 17) and younger narratives. Only in the former, however, is the query appropriate, Saul there recognizing David in the darkness by his voice. There, too, the appropriate reply is given.

17 ff. Saul is touched, even to tears, by David's magnanimous conduct, almost without a parallel in that rude age. His native generosity, which jealousy working on a mind diseased had overlaid, is evoked, and prompts him to a full acknowledgement of the higher moral ideal of David, whom he prays that God may reward. This representation, however, just because of its lofty tone, seems less original than its parallel in xxvi. 21, 25.

18. thou hast declared: read, by inserting one letter, 'this day thou hast put the crown upon thy kind dealing with me' (cf. Gen. xix. 19).

20 f. Saul acknowledges David as destined to succeed him on the throne of Israel, and implores his clemency as Jonathan had done before (xx. 14 ff.). The doubtful historicity of this constant trait of our younger sources has been already commented upon (see on xxiii. 17). Its expression here certainly has the air of a later interpretation of the more indefinite parallel, xxvi. 25.

wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not
22 destroy my name out of my father's house. And David
sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and
his men gat them up unto the hold.

25 [M] And Samuel died; and all Israel gathered themselves together, and lamented him, and buried him in his
house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to
the wilderness of Paran.

2 And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions
were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he
had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and
3 he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the
man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and
the woman was of good understanding, and of a beautiful
countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his
4 doings; and he was of the house of Caleb. And David
heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.
5 And David sent ten young men, and David said unto

(*c*) xxv. 1–44. *David and Abigail.*

This chapter is universally regarded as an extract from our oldest source, and as a masterpiece of Hebrew narrative. It is prefaced by an editorial note recording the death of Samuel (cf. xxviii. 3), and his burial, amid universal lamentation, within the precincts of his house in Ramah.

1. the wilderness of Paran: read with LXX (B), and as the context requires, 'the wilderness of Maon' (xxiii. 24; see also note on xxiii. 15). The former, the present desert of *Et-tih* and the scene of the wanderings between Sinai and Kadesh-barnea, lay too far to the south.

2. Carmel: now *Kurmul*, between Ziph and Maon, about a mile to the north of the latter (cf. xv. 12, xxx. 29, LXX). The sheep-shearing was from the earliest period a time of festivity and generous hospitality (see 2 Sam. xiii. 23). The brief but pregnant characterization which follows—the work of a literary artist—gives the key to the subsequent dénouement.

3. he was of the house of Caleb: *lit.* 'a Calebite'; the clan of the Calebites had occupied the district of which Hebron was the centre since the conquest (Judges i. 20).

the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal,
and greet him in my name: and thus shall ye say to 6
him that liveth *in prosperity*, Peace be both unto thee,
and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that
thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast 7
shearers: thy shepherds have now been with us, and we
did them no hurt, neither was there aught missing unto
them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young 8
men, and they will tell thee: wherefore let the young
men find favour in thine eyes; for we come in a good
day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand,
unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when 9
David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according
to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.
And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who 10
is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many
servants now a days that break away every man from his
master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and 11
my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it
unto men of whom I know not whence they be? So 12

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6. The opening clause must be emended: 'and thus shall ye say to my brother' (so Vulg., Wellh., Driver, &c.).

7 f. David contrasts the strict discipline maintained by him with the usual licence of similar roving bands, and asks that some acknowledgement of this should be made by the wealthy farmer. This species of blackmail is regularly levied at the present day by the Bedouin living on the borders of the desert and the cultivated land. In return they guarantee the protection of life and property (cf. verse 21) in these notoriously insecure districts.

8. we come in a good day: a literal rendering of the Hebrew term for 'a feast day' (Esther viii. 17, ix. 22, and the Mishna literature *passim*).

10. Nabal shows his churlishness by insulting David and his men, suggesting that the former is a nobody, and the latter a band of runaway slaves.

11. my water: read, with LXX, 'my wine,' as more appropriate to a day of feasting.

David's young men turned on their way, and went back,
and came and told him according to all these words.
13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man
his sword. And they girded on every man his sword;
and David also girded on his sword: and there went up
after David about four hundred men; and two hundred
14 abode by the stuff. But one of the young men told
Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he
15 flew upon them. But the men were very good unto us,
and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as
long as we were conversant with them, when we were in
16 the fields: they were a wall unto us both by night and
by day, all the while we were with them keeping the
17 sheep. Now therefore know and consider what thou
wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and
against all his house: for he is such a son of Belial, that
18 one cannot speak to him. Then Abigail made haste,
and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine,
and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of
parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two
19 hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. And she
said unto her young men, Go on before me; behold,

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15 f. Nabal's shepherds testify to the excellence of David's discipline, and to the protection afforded them by his men.

17. such a son of Belial: see on i. 16. The shepherds' estimate of their master's character is confirmed by one still better qualified to judge, see verse 25.

18 ff. By her intelligent grasp of the situation, by her prompt action and generous gifts, and by her conciliatory and diplomatic address, Abigail more than justifies the author's description of her as 'a woman of good understanding' (verse 3).

five measures of parched corn: rather more than a bushel and a half, the 'measure,' in Hebrew *seah*, being the third part of the ephah or bushel (Hastings' *DB.*, iv. 910 ff.). For the **clusters of raisins**—the 'dried grapes' of Num. vi. 3—and the **cakes of figs**, see the writer's article 'Fruit,' in *EBi.*, ii. 1568, 1570.

I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.
And it was so, as she rode on her ass, and came down 20
by the covert of the mountain, that, behold, David and
his men came down against her; and she met them.
Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that 21
this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was
missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath returned
me evil for good. God do so unto the enemies 22
of David, and more also, if I leave of all that pertain to
him by the morning light so much as one man child.
And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted 23
off her ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed
herself to the ground. And she fell at his feet, and said, 24
Upon me, my lord, upon me be the iniquity: and let
thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine ears, and
hear thou the words of thine handmaid. Let not my 25
lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal:
for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly
is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young
men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now therefore, 26

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20. by the covert of the mountain: the original seems to imply that Abigail was concealed from the view of David and his men approaching from some neighbouring hill-top, until they all meet suddenly at the foot. This is in keeping with the dramatic instincts of the narrator, who represents David as at the moment vowing the direst vengeance on Nabal and his house.

22. Read: 'God do so unto David,' see on 2 Sam. xii. 14.

23 f. Abigail omits nothing of the punctilious courtesy of the East. Budde calls attention to the intentional conciseness of the style at this point, in contrast to the somewhat 'turgid eloquence' that follows. 'Everywhere in the O. T. (he adds), women's speeches are distinguished by this characteristic'! Cf. 2 Sam. xiv. 12 ff.

25. Fool (see R. V. marg.) **is his name, and folly is with him** reproduces the play upon the name Nabal, although our 'fool' is not the precise equivalent of the Hebrew term, which suggests one who has no regard for God or man. Cf. the definition given in Isa. xxxii. 5 f. (note marg.), and the note on 2 Sam. xiii. 12 f.

my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth,
seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from bloodguiltiness, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now
therefore let thine enemies, and them that seek evil to
27 my lord, be as Nabal. And now this present which thy
servant hath brought unto my lord, let it be given unto
28 the young men that follow my lord. Forgive, I pray
thee, the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will
certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord
fighteth the battles of the LORD; and evil shall not be
29 found in thee all thy days. And though man be risen
up to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul, yet the soul of
my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the
LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them
30 shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling. And it
shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to
my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken
concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee prince

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26. let thine enemies . . . be as Nabal: this clause seems to imply—for the author's meaning is not clear—a prevision on Abigail's part of Nabal's impending fate (verse 38), the underlying thought being that vengeance should be left in the hand of God.

28. a sure house: see on ii. 35; **the battles of the LORD:** see on xviii. 17.

29. Since the rest of Abigail's good wishes are all for the future, it is now usual to read: 'and should a man rise up . . . may the life of my lord be bound in the bundle of the living (R. V. marg.) with (i.e. under the protection of) Yahweh thy God.' This beautiful and tender prayer has long been applied to the life beyond the grave, and its initial letters are to-day found on almost every Jewish tombstone. But God had not yet revealed 'the eternal hope' to His people, and the wish must be interpreted of the earthly life of David, which Abigail prays may be prolonged under the Divine protection. The figure is that of a precious jewel carefully tied up (cf. Gen. xlii. 35) and placed in safe keeping. The converse follows in the prayer that the lives of David's enemies may be cast away like the stones from a sling.

over Israel; that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor 31
offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed
blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself:
and when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord,
then remember thine handmaid. And David said to 32
Abigail, Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, which
sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy 33
wisdom, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this
day from bloodguiltiness, and from avenging myself with
mine own hand. For in very deed, as the LORD, the 34
God of Israel, liveth, which hath withholden me from
hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet
me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the
morning light so much as one man child. So David 35
received of her hand that which she had brought him:
and he said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house;
see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted
thy person. And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, 36
he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king;
and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very
drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more,
until the morning light. And it came to pass in the 37
morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, that his
wife told him these things, and his heart died within him,

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31. A skilful appeal to David's peace of conscience. In the happier future David will have cause to remember Abigail and her counsel with gratitude.

nor offence (*lit.* stumbling-block) **of heart:** no ground for remorse. In the O. T. the heart is the seat of conscience, cf. xxiv. 5.

32 ff. David acknowledges that Abigail has been a messenger of God, sent to save him from the guilt of blood.

35. I have accepted thy person: *lit.* 'have lifted up thy face,' here and Gen. xix. 21 equivalent to 'I have granted thy request.'

36. Abigail's silence in the circumstances is one more proof of her discretion (verse 33, marg.).

38 and he became as a stone. And it came to pass about
ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.
39 And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said,
Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my
reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept back
his servant from evil: and the evil-doing of Nabal hath
the LORD returned upon his own head. And David
sent and spake concerning Abigail, to take her to him
40 to wife. And when the servants of David were come to
Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David
hath sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife.
41 And she arose, and bowed herself with her face to the
earth, and said, Behold, thine handmaid is a servant to
42 wash the feet of the servants of my lord. And Abigail
hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five
damsels of hers that followed her; and she went after
43 the messengers of David, and became his wife. David
also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they became both of
44 them his wives. Now Saul had given Michal his
daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, which
was of Gallim.

26 And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying,

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39. David sent and spake concerning Abigail: i.e. sent her an offer of marriage, as in the Revisers' reference, Cant. viii. 8. Such, to us unseemly, haste was not repugnant to the social code of those days. It is to be assumed, however, that a short interval elapsed, as in the case of Bath-sheba (2 Sam. xi. 27).

43. Ahinoam of Jezreel, a town in the neighbourhood of Ziph and Maon, became the mother of David's eldest son, Amnon (2 Sam. iii. 2).

44. Palti: a shorter form of Paltiel (2 Sam. iii. 15). A place named **Gallim** is mentioned in the neighbourhood of Anathoth in Benjamin (Isa. x. 30).

(*d*) xxvi. *An earlier version of the Ziphites' treachery and David's magnanimity to Saul.*

The arguments for the priority of this account over that already

Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert? Then Saul arose, and went 2 down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul pitched in the hill of 3 Hachilah, which is before the desert, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. David therefore 4 sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come of a certainty. And David arose, and came to the place 5 where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, and the people pitched round about him. Then answered 6 David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go

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given in ch. xxiv have been indicated on p. 157. No one will assert that David may not have spared Saul's life on a previous occasion, but if so, it is passing strange that there is no allusion here on the part of either Saul or David to the repetition of so remarkable an incident. In view, therefore, of the well-known methods of the Hebrew historians, the easier explanation is that adopted by almost all modern students, that in these two chapters we have duplicate versions of one and the same historical incident.

1. the hill of Hachilah has been identified by Conder with a ridge, *El-kolah*, six miles east of Ziph and nearly halfway to En-gedi. It is here described as 'before Jeshimon' (see marg.), that is, as overlooking the barren tract of country between the highlands of Judah and the northern half of the Dead Sea, more frequently termed the Wilderness of Judah.

4. of a certainty: the text is corrupt. The preposition 'unto' of the original and the context both suggest the name of a place to which Saul had come (cf. marg.).

5. within the place of the wagons: see on xvii. 20.

6. Ahimelech the Hittite: doubtless, like the more famous Uriah, a soldier of fortune belonging to the powerful race which had their principal seats at Carchemish on the Euphrates and Kadesh on the Orontes. See further Driver's *Genesis*, 228 ff.

Abishai . . . Joab: the first mention of these 'sons of

down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said,
7 I will go down with thee. So David and Abishai came
to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping
within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in
the ground at his head: and Abner and the people lay
8 round about him. Then said Abishai to David, God
hath delivered up thine enemy into thine hand this day:
now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the
spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him
9 the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy
him not: for who can put forth his hand against the
10 LORD's anointed, and be guiltless? And David said, As
the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day
shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and
11 perish. The LORD forbid that I should put forth mine
hand against the LORD's anointed: but now take, I pray
thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water,
12 and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse

Zeruiah,' who with Asahel their brother figure so conspicuously in the life of David. Zeruiah, according to Chron. ii. 16, was David's sister, and as David was the youngest son of a large family, there is nothing improbable in his nephews being about his own age. Why these redoubtable warriors should always be described as the sons of their mother remains a puzzle. Their father was probably already in his grave at Beth-lehem (2 Sam. ii. 32).

7. At the camping-grounds of the Bedouin Arabs, a spear stuck in the ground outside the entrance distinguishes the tent of the sheikh. In Saul's case also the spear seems to have been a symbol of authority. It is expressly mentioned as being in his hand as he sat in state on the moot-hill at Gibeah (xxii. 6; cf. xviii. 10, xx. 33).

8 ff. With Abishai's proposal and David's reply here compare the parallel in xxiv. 4 ff.

10. The text of R. V. suggests three alternatives, the margin preferably two. In this case God will smite Saul either directly with a sudden stroke, as in the case of Nabal, or indirectly—as actually happened—through the hazard of battle.

of water from Saul's head; and they gat them away, and
no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake: for
they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the
LORD was fallen upon them. Then David went over 13
to the other side, and stood on the top of the mountain
afar off; a great space being between them: and David 14
cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying,
Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and
said, Who art thou that criest to the king? And David 15
said to Abner, Art not thou a *valiant* man? and who is
like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept
watch over thy lord the king? for there came one of the
people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not 16
good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are
worthy to die, because ye have not kept watch over your
lord, the LORD's anointed. And now, see, where the
king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his
head. And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this 17
thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my
voice, my lord, O king. And he said, Wherefore doth 18
my lord pursue after his servant? for what have I done?
or what evil is in mine hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, 19
let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If
it be the LORD that hath stirred thee up against me, let

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17. Saul recognized David's voice, although it was still too dark to recognize his face and figure. Here, therefore, Saul's query is in place, see on xxiv. 16.

19 f. Verses 19 and 20 are of great interest as throwing light upon some aspects of religious belief among the early Hebrews. David can account for Saul's persistent enmity only by one or other of two hypotheses. Either it is due to the direct instigation of Yahweh, in which case an offended deity can always be placated by the smell (note marg.) of a sacrifice, an antique conception found also in Gen. viii. 21, or it is the result of the influence upon Saul of some slander-mongering 'children of men.'

him accept an offering: but if it be the children of men,
cursed be they before the LORD; for they have driven
me out this day that I should not cleave unto the
inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.
20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away
from the presence of the LORD: for the king of Israel is
come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge
21 in the mountains. Then said Saul, I have sinned: return,
my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because
my life was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I
22 have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. And
David answered and said, Behold the spear, O king! let
23 then one of the young men come over and fetch it. And
the LORD shall render to every man his righteousness
and his faithfulness: forasmuch as the LORD delivered
thee into my hand to-day, and I would not put forth
24 mine hand against the LORD's anointed. And, behold,

On these David invokes the curse of God, the issue of which is death. Nothing less is sufficient for men by whom David is being driven out like another Cain 'from the presence of Yahweh.' For a distinctive feature of the early Semitic religion is the belief, here so clearly illustrated, that each deity had his own land, beyond which his power and influence, and therefore his worship, did not extend. For David, Yahweh is, of course, the only legitimate object of worship within the territory of Israel, 'the inheritance of Yahweh' (1 Kings viii. 53), but the existence of other gods, as e. g. Chemosh in Moab, Milcom in Ammon, is also implied, as well as their claim upon the allegiance and worship of those who took refuge within the land of *their* 'inheritance.' See further Kautzsch on 'The Religion of Israel in the Pre-Prophetic Period' in Hastings' *DB.*, extra vol., 635.

20. away from the presence of the LORD: outside the bounds of Yahweh's land, as explained above, where David could no longer maintain communion with God by sacrifice (cf. Hos. ix. 3 ff.). The idea of dying in a land that is not Yahweh's is abhorrent to His pious worshipper.

the king . . . is come out to seek a flea: a copyist's alteration, under the influence of xxiv. 14, of the true text 'to seek my life' (LXX).

as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation. Then Saul said to 25
David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do mightily, and shalt surely prevail. So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one 27
day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in all the borders of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

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25. With this compare xxiv. 17 ff. A careful comparison of the contents of the speeches in the two chapters seems to us to show beyond any doubt on which side the greater antiquity and originality are to be found.

C. 1 Sam. xxvii–xxxi. *David as the Vassal of the King of Gath. The Philistine Invasion and Death of Saul and Jonathan.*

This subdivision carries forward the story of David's fortunes from the day that he determined to put himself beyond the jurisdiction of Saul to the tragic death of the latter upon Mount Gilboa. Each chapter is practically concerned with a distinct episode, and accordingly the sections of the commentary may follow substantially the chapter-divisions. The compiler continues to draw from our oldest source. Ch. xxviii. 3 ff., which now manifestly breaks the connexion between xxviii. 1 f. and xxix, alone gives rise to difference of opinion as to its true position and provenance.

(*a*) xxvii. 1—xxviii. 2. *David takes refuge with Achish of Gath. His policy as the king's vassal.*

Contrary to the expectations raised by the amicable parting we have just witnessed, we now find David compelled to take the step from which he has just shrunk in horror (xxvi. 19 f.) and to crave the protection of Saul's bitterest enemies, the Philistines. The narrator shows how, in a difficult situation, David endeavoured to steer a middle course between his duty to his protector and his duty to his country.

1. We are given clearly to understand that David took the extreme and unpatriotic step here recorded only as a last and desperate resource. That this is on every ground the more trustworthy representation as compared with the parallel version xxi. 10–15 is self-evident.

2 And David arose, and passed over, he and the six hun-
dred men that were with him, unto Achish the son of
3 Maoch, king of Gath. And David dwelt with Achish at
Gath, he and his men, every man with his household,
even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess,
4 and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. And it was
told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no
more again for him.

5 And David said unto Achish, If now I have found
grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in one of
the cities in the country, that I may dwell there: for why
should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?
6 Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag
pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

7 And the number of the days that David dwelt in the
country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.
8 And David and his men went up, and made a raid upon
the Geshurites, and the Girzites, and the Amalekites:

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5. David requests of Achish permission to retire, in modern phraseology, to one of the provincial towns. The reason alleged seems to have been that it was too great an honour to continue in the immediate vicinity of the king, with the implication, perhaps, on David's part that he could be of more service to his suzerain as Warden of the Marches. In reality, he must have wished to be free from the continual surveillance to which he was exposed in the capital city. It has also been suggested that in a district of his own David would be able to observe his own religious rites as a worshipper of Yahweh.

6. Ziklag: probably *Zuheilike*, about eleven miles east by south of Gaza. Now granted to David in fee, it afterwards became the private property of the kings of Judah.

wherefore . . . unto this day: if part of the original narrative, this clause suggests a date for the latter after the secession under Rehoboam. Before that event there were only kings of Israel (cf. Introduction, sect. iv).

8. the Geshurites, and the Girzites: David turns his arms against several of the tribes on the marches. The Geshurites may have been a small tribe on the frontier of Egypt (cf. Joshua xiii.

for those *nations* were the inhabitants of the land, which were of old, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of
Egypt. And David smote the land, and saved neither 9
man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel;
and he returned, and came to Achish. And Achish said, 10
Whither have ye made a raid to-day? And David said, Against the South of Judah, and against the South of the Jerahmeelites, and against the South of the Kenites.
And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring 11

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2 R.V.). The better known Geshurites of the Jaulan are out of the question here (see on 2 Sam. iii. 3). The Girzites are otherwise unknown. Another reading (see R.V. marg.) is Gizrites, the inhabitants of Gezer. But this city lay much too far to the north. It is possible that both Geshurites and Girzites are corrupt duplicates of a single tribal name.

the Amalekites: see on xv. 2. The clause following is obscure, and in parts corrupt. Read probably: 'for they inhabited the land which is from Telam (cf. xv. 7) as thou goest unto Shur,' &c. See Driver, *Notes*, &c.

9. For the ban of the second degree, of which we have here an example, see on xv. 3. Its execution, however, was by no means 'thorough,' as is seen from the incidents of ch. xxx.

he returned, and came to Achish: from this and the similar notice, verse 11ª, it is to be inferred that part of David's arrangement with Achish was that the latter should receive a share of the spoils of every foray. An interesting discussion of the constitutional position of David, as a *gēr* or outlander, will be found in Bertholet, *Die Stellung der Israeliten und der Juden zu den Fremden*, 28–32.

10. the South of Judah: here and elsewhere it is better to retain the geographical term of the original and render, 'the Negeb of Judah.' The Negeb—*lit.* 'the dry, parched land'—is the standing name of 'the southernmost of the natural divisions of Palestine, the steppe region which forms the transition to the true desert,' including Beer-sheba on the north, and Kadesh-barnea on the south. See Cheyne's article 'Negeb,' *EBi.*, iii, with map.

the Jerahmeelites: a southern clan allied to the Calebites, with whom they were afterwards absorbed into the tribe of Judah (1 Chron. ii. 42). For **the Kenites** see on xv. 6. Both clans appear again, xxx. 29.

11 f. An interesting glimpse of David's policy at this period. By giving out that he had raided certain districts belonging to his

them to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so hath been his manner all the while
12 he hath dwelt in the country of the Philistines. And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

28 And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their hosts together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me in the host, thou
2 and thy men. And David said to Achish, Therefore thou shalt know what thy servant will do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented

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own tribe and its allies he succeeded in lulling the suspicions that were bound to arise as to his complete loyalty to his suzerain (cf. xxix. 3, 6).

xxviii. **1.** continues the preceding narrative. The Philistines collect their forces for the last campaign of that 'sore war' (xiv. 52) which lasted 'all the days of Saul.' This gives Achish occasion to remind his vassal of his duty to fight under his lord's banner.

2. Therefore thou shalt know: for 'thou' read with LXX 'now,' and render: 'good and well, now shalt thou know,' &c. The ambiguity is intentional. At this stage David declines to commit himself; Achish, however, assumes that David will accompany him.

keeper of mine head: captain of the royal bodyguard, as rendered by LXX (for the Greek term see Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, 98). David soon afterwards followed this precedent by appointing a bodyguard of foreign mercenaries.

(*b*) xxviii. 3–25. *Saul's visit to the necromancer at En-dor.* This section, as has been already noted, breaks the main thread of the narrative, which is found again at xxix. 1 ff. Thus we hear of the Philistine call to arms in xxviii. 1; in xxix. 1 the place of meeting is given as Aphek, which lay in the plain of Sharon (see on iv. 1). From Aphek the Philistines advance, through one of the passes connecting Sharon with Esdraelon, to Jezreel where the Israelite army lay encamped (xxix. 1, 11). But in xxviii. 4 the him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines 4 gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they

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former are still further north at Shunem, while the latter have evidently retired before the Philistine advance to the mountain ridge of Gilboa. Again, Saul's visit to En-dor is represented as taking place on the night before the battle (xxviii. 19). Chronologically, therefore, the place of the section now before us is immediately in front of ch. xxxi. That it actually stood there in the historical document (M) to which, by universal consent, the rest of these chapters (xxvii–xxxi) belong is, we believe, the more probable view (so Budde and others), although by the majority of critics it is assigned to the same source as ch. xv (the younger and less historical S). The main argument for the latter attribution is drawn from verses 17 f., which are a recapitulation of the contents of ch. xv. But the verses in question are better taken as a later addition to the true text (see notes below). Budde, further, has made the plausible suggestion that the present dislocation is due to the fact that this account of Saul's resort to necromancy was omitted by the Deuteronomic compiler of Samuel as unworthy of one who was the LORD's anointed, just as it is probable that the great section 2 Sam. ix–xx was omitted as containing so much that reflected on the character of David. The later and more liberal-minded editor who gave our Book of Samuel its present form restored both the omitted sections, but inadvertently inserted xxviii. 3 ff. somewhat too early in the narrative (see further, Introduction, sects. v, vi).

3. The first half of this verse has already appeared in the redactional note, xxv. 1.

those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards: the precise meaning of the words so rendered and the distinction between them, if there be a distinction, are still matters of dispute. Budde has a very full note here, see also Driver on the classical passage, Deut. xviii. 10 f., and Davies' article 'Divination' in *EBi.*, i. 1120 f. There is a peculiar pathos in this picture of Saul, once so jealous of the honour of Yahweh, reduced to having recourse to those dishonouring forms of superstition which he had done his best to suppress.

4. See introductory note above. The two armies are facing each other across the eastern end of the plain of Esdraelon. **Shunem**, now *Sulem* or *Solam*, lies on its northern edge, at the foot of *Jebel Dahi*, or Little Hermon, **Gilboa**, now *Jebel Fakua*,

5 pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the
Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.
6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered
him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.
7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that
hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire
of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is
8 a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor. And
Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and
went, he and two men with him, and they came to the
woman by night: and he said, Divine unto me, I pray
thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring me up whomsoever
9 I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him,
Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath
cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards,
out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for
10 my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by
the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no
11 punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the
woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said,
12 Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel,
she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to

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is the ridge running south-east along the southern side of the valley of Jezreel.

6. By none of the recognized channels of Divine communication —dreams, the sacred lot (see on xiv. 41), prophets—does God vouchsafe an answer to Saul's inquiry as to the issue of the impending engagement.

7. a woman that hath a familiar spirit: in modern phrase, 'a woman that is a necromancer'; so in verse 8: 'divine unto me by necromancy.'

En-dor: the modern *Endûr*, on the north side of Little Hermon, opposite Mount Tabor.

12. The want of logical connexion between the two halves of this verse has long been felt. Why should the sight of Samuel, whom of course she was expecting to see, have had such an effect

Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art
Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for 13
what seest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I see
a god coming up out of the earth. And he said unto 14
her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man
cometh up; and he is covered with a robe. And Saul
perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face
to the ground, and did obeisance. And Samuel said to 15
Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?
And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from
me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor
by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest
make known unto me what I shall do. And Samuel 16
said, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the
LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine adversary? And the LORD hath wrought for himself, as he 17

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upon this professional necromancer, and how did it cause her to recognize Saul in his disguise? Perles, followed by Budde and Nowack, proposes to read 'Saul' for 'Samuel': 'when the woman looked at Saul, she cried,' &c. The connexion is now clear. The mention of Samuel's name (verse 11), coupled with her knowledge that Saul was in the neighbourhood, led to her recognition of Saul, and the conviction that she had been caught in a trap which the king had set for her. Hence her abject fear, which is quieted by Saul in verse 13. It appears, further, that Saul was the first to recognize Samuel in the ascending spirit, which verse 14 shows to have been visible to the woman, but invisible to Saul.

15. to bring me up: i. e. from Sheol, the abode of the dead; see on ii. 6.

16. and is become thine adversary: a doubtful reading and rendering. The original may have been: 'and is on the side of thine adversaries,' the Philistines. The LXX reading in R. V. marg. seems to betray the influence of verse 17.

xxviii. 17–19^a (to Philistines). These verses have been recognized as a later insertion based on ch. xv (especially verse 28) even by some who regard the chapter before us as the natural sequel

spake by me: and the LORD hath rent the kingdom out
of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to
18 David. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the
LORD, and didst not execute his fierce wrath upon
Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto
19 thee this day. Moreover the LORD will deliver Israel
also with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to-morrow
shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD
shall deliver the host of Israel also into the hand of the
20 Philistines. Then Saul fell straightway his full length
upon the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words
of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he
21 had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. And
the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore
troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid
hath hearkened unto thy voice, and I have put my life
in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which
22 thou spakest unto me. Now therefore, I pray thee,
hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and
let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that
thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.
23 But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants,
together with the woman, constrained him; and he

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to the account there given of Saul's rejection. That they are foreign to the original context is best seen from the double reference, in identical terms, to the Philistines in verse 19. Verse 16, therefore, should be continued thus: 'and to-morrow shalt thou,' &c. For the bearing of this on the literary affinity of the chapter, and ultimately on the historicity of the episode, see introductory note above.

17. the LORD hath wrought for himself: read, with LXX (see marg.): 'and the LORD hath done unto thee as he spake by me.' Cf. the original passage xv. 28.

19. to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the original will scarcely bear this rendering; read, with LXX and most editors: 'to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons with thee be fallen.'

hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fatted 24 calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it; and she took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: and she brought it before Saul, and before 25 his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

Now the Philistines gathered together all their hosts **29** to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by the fountain which is in Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines 2 passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: and David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish. Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these 3 Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell away *unto me* unto this day? But the princes of the 4 Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make the man return, that he may go back to his place where thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us: for wherewith

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(*c*) xxix. *David is dismissed by the lords of the Philistines.*

This chapter and the following continue the narrative of xxviii.

1 f. As on a former occasion (iv. 1), the Philistines muster their forces at Aphek, while the Israelites encamp **by the fountain which is in Jezreel,** generally identified with the copious spring *Ain Jalud* at the foot of Gilboa, in Judges vii. 1 called 'the spring of Harod.'

3 ff. Achish justifies David's presence on the twofold ground (1) that he had every reason to take arms against Saul, and (2) that he had shown himself thoroughly loyal during his period of vassalage. The arguments of the Philistine princes are unanswerable (cf. the incident, xiv. 21).

4. lest . . . he become an adversary to us: Heb. *sāṭān*, as

should this *fellow* reconcile himself unto his lord? should
5 it not be with the heads of these men? Is not this David,
of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying,

Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands?

6 Then Achish called David, and said unto him, As the
LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out
and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my
sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of
thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords
7 favour thee not. Wherefore now return, and go in peace,
8 that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines. And
David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and
what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have
been before thee unto this day, that I may not go and
9 fight against the enemies of my lord the king? And
Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art
good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding
the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go
10 up with us to the battle. Wherefore now rise up early
in the morning with the servants of thy lord that are
come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the

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2 Sam. xix. 22 and elsewhere of a human antagonist. Only in later literature does the word become the name of the great adversary of mankind (Zech. iii. 1 f., 1 Chron. xxi. 1, and the opening chapters of Job).

8. David affects to regard Achish's polite expression of the princes' order as casting suspicion on his loyalty. The narrator does not disclose the real mind of David on the subject (cf. xxviii. 2).

9. as an angel of God: blamelessness seems here the point of comparison. Otherwise 2 Sam. xiv. 17, xix. 27, which see.

10. The following has been dropped from the end of this verse: 'depart and go to the place where I have stationed you [viz. Ziklag], and put no wicked design in thy heart, for thou art good in my sight' (LXX). 'It is assumed by Achish that the high-spirited warrior will feel insulted, and be tempted to take revenge' (H. P. Smith).

morning, and have light, depart. So David rose up early, 11
he and his men, to depart in the morning, to return into
the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up
to Jezreel.

And it came to pass, when David and his men were 30
come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had
made a raid upon the South, and upon Ziklag, and had
smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; and had taken 2
captive the women *and all* that were therein, both small
and great: they slew not any, but carried them off, and
went their way. And when David and his men came 3
to the city, behold, it was burned with fire; and their
wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken
captives. Then David and the people that were with 4
him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no
more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken 5
captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife
of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly dis- 6
tressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because
the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his
sons and for his daughters: but David strengthened him-
self in the LORD his God.

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11. The Philistines advance from Aphek to **Jezreel**, the important city, now *Zerin*, at the head of the valley of Jezreel.

(*d*) xxx. *The Amalekite raid on Ziklag, and its sequel.*

On the third day after leaving Aphek, David and his men arrive at Ziklag to find it raided and burned. The absence of the fighting men afforded these wild Bedouin an excellent opportunity of revenging David's treatment of their tribe (xxviii. 7).

2. The intention of the raiders was apparently to sell their captives in the Egyptian slave-market.

6. David was greatly distressed: rather, 'was in great straits,' the reference being not to inward emotion, but to his personal danger, as explained in the next clause. But David's courage did not fail, for 'the rock of his strength and his refuge were in God' (Ps. lxii. 7).

7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of
Ahimelech, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod.
And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.
8 And David inquired of the LORD, saying, If I pursue
after this troop, shall I overtake them? And he answered
him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake *them*, and
9 shalt without fail recover *all*. So David went, he and
the six hundred men that were with him, and came to
the brook Besor, where those that were left behind
10 stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men:
for two hundred stayed behind, which were so faint that
11 they could not go over the brook Besor: and they found
an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and
gave him bread, and he did eat; and they gave him
12 water to drink: and they gave him a piece of a cake of
figs, and two clusters of raisins; and when he had eaten,
his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread,
13 nor drunk any water, three days and three nights. And
David said unto him, To whom belongest thou? and
whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of
Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me,
14 because three days agone I fell sick. We made a raid
upon the South of the Cherethites, and upon that which

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7 f. David proceeds to ascertain the will of Yahweh by the customary means, the oracle of the ephod (see on xiv. 41, and xxiii. 2). Although only two questions are given in the text, we see from the answers that three were put in succession, each of which received an affirmative answer.

9. the brook Besor: probably, if the Amalekites were making for Egypt, the modern *Wadi-esh-Sheriah*, a branch of the *Wadi Ghuzzeh*.

10. One-third of David's force is found to be too exhausted for further pursuit, a condition by no means surprising, if they had just covered the eighty miles or thereby from Aphek to Ziklag in three days (verse 1).

12. a cake of figs, &c.: see on xxv. 18.

14. the South of the Cherethites: the Cherethite Negeb (see

belongeth to Judah, and upon the South of Caleb; and
we burned Ziklag with fire. And David said to him, 15
Wilt thou bring me down to this troop? And he said,
Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me,
nor deliver me up into the hands of my master, and I
will bring thee down to this troop. And when he had 16
brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad over
all the ground, eating and drinking, and feasting, because
of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land
of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. And 17
David smote them from the twilight even unto the
evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man
of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon
camels and fled. And David recovered all that the 18
Amalekites had taken: and David rescued his two wives.
And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small 19
nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor
any thing that they had taken to them: David brought
back all. And David took all the flocks and the herds, 20
which they drave before those *other* cattle, and said, This

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on xxvii. 10), that portion of Southern Palestine occupied by the Cherethites, a clan closely allied to the Philistines, with whom they are associated by Zephaniah (ii. 5) and Ezekiel (xxv. 16). See also on 2 Sam. viii. 18.

the South of Caleb: the Calebite Negeb, the country round Maon, Carmel, and Ziph occupied by the clan of Caleb. For the five Negebs, see reference on xxvii. 10.

17. of the next day: the original is here corrupt; read, with Wellh., Budde, and others, 'to put them to the ban.' The rout will thus have extended only over the period before and after sunset.

20. A corrupt and unintelligible text is responsible for what appears in our version as a selfish abuse of authority on David's part. The original probably told that, besides recovering their own property, David and his men captured an enormous loot, the destination of which we hear of later (verses 26 ff.).

21 is David's spoil. And David came to the two hundred
men, which were so faint that they could not follow
David, whom also they had made to abide at the brook
Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet
the people that were with him: and when David came
22 near to the people, he saluted them. Then answered
all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went
with David, and said, Because they went not with us,
we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have
recovered, save to every man his wife and his children,
23 that they may lead them away, and depart. Then said
David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which
the LORD hath given unto us, who hath preserved us,
and delivered the troop that came against us into our
24 hand. And who will hearken unto you in this matter?
for as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall
his share be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall share

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21. The last clause should read: 'and they came near to the people (the returning troop) and saluted them.'

xxx. 22–25. An interesting illustration of the creation of a precedent in Hebrew law, regulating the equitable division of booty captured in war.

23. with that which the LORD hath given unto us, who, &c.: this cannot fairly be got from the received text. Read, as suggested by LXX: 'after that the LORD hath wrought for (or helped) us, and hath preserved us,' &c. 'In any case we have a warning against ingratitude to God; everywhere gratitude manifests itself in kindness to others, cf. xi. 13' (Budde).

24 f. The equitable distribution here formulated became **a statute and an ordinance for Israel** from this time forward. Notwithstanding the explicit account given of the origin of this statute, its introduction in the course of time was ascribed to Moses by one of those legal fictions characteristic of all ancient systems of jurisprudence, see Num. xxxi. 27 ff., with Gray's *Commentary* (Intern. Crit. Series), where numerous parallels from other systems are given. The light which is thereby thrown upon the growth of the 'Mosaic' legislation is ably discussed by W. R. Smith in *OTJC.*[2] 386 f.

alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he 25
made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel, unto this
day.

And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil 26
unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying,
Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of
the LORD; to them which were in Beth-el, and to them 27
which were in Ramoth of the South, and to them which
were in Jattir; and to them which were in Aroer, and to 28
them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in
Eshtemoa; and to them which were in Racal, and to 29
them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and
to them which were in the cities of the Kenites; and to 30
them which were in Hormah, and to them which were
in Cor-ashan, and to them which were in Athach; and 31
to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places
where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

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xxx. 26-31. *David's politic disposal of his share of the spoil.*

26. a present: *lit.* 'a blessing' (R. V. marg.), in the secondary sense of this word, the gift that accompanied the message of goodwill, as x. 27.

27 ff. Beth-el, not the well-known Benjamite city, but a town in Southern Judah, named, under a slightly different form, in 1 Chron. iv. 30 along with Hormah and Ziklag. **Ramoth,** better Ramah (LXX), lay in the territory of Simeon (Joshua xix. 8). **Jattir** and **Eshtemoa,** also Joshua xv. 48, xxi. 14. **Aroer,** the modern *Ararah* in the wady of that name, south-east of Beer-sheba. For **Racal** read, with LXX, Carmel. The **Jerahmeelites** and the **Kenites** have been already met with as clans of the Negeb (xxvii. 10). **Hormah,** not yet identified, is frequently mentioned elsewhere among the towns of the extreme south. **Cor-ashan,** better, as margin, Bor-ashan, is a corruption of Beer-sheba (LXX, B), which would scarcely have been omitted. **Hebron,** the chief city of Judah, and soon to be David's first capital. **Siphmoth** and **Athach** have not been identified.

In this distribution of the loot among **all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt,** David showed his talent for diplomacy, as well as his gratitude to those who had

31 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell
2 down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchi-
3 shua, the sons of Saul. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was greatly
4 distressed by reason of the archers. Then said Saul to his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would

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befriended him in the past. His temporary alliance with the Philistines was no doubt much criticized, and it was wise, in view of future contingencies, to take the first opportunity of removing all suspicion of his loyalty to his own tribe of Judah, at least, and the allied clans.

(*e*) xxxi. *The death of Saul and Jonathan on Mount Gilboa.*

In the original sequence of M, the story of Saul's visit to En-dor now followed as the prelude to ch. xxxi (see above). The account here given of Saul's tragic end—the relation of which to the contents of 2 Sam. i. 6 ff. will be discussed later—is also found with slight variations, representing in some cases a purer text, in 1 Chron. x. 1-12.

2. Abinadab is identified by the Revisers (note marg.) with Ishvi of xiv. 49, but the latter was there shown to be a variant for Ish-baal (Ish-bosheth), who does not appear to have been present on Gilboa.

3. and he was greatly distressed, &c.: the words of the original seem to denote mental distress, as if the once courageous king were paralysed with fear, but the text is open to question. The A. V. rendering 'and he was sore wounded of the archers,' though supported by the LXX, cannot be got from the received text, yet this or something similar is implied by the appeal of verse 4.

4. thrust me through, and abuse me: this can only mean that Saul dreaded insult to his dead body by mutilation or otherwise. But this contingency could not be evaded by his being slain by a Hebrew rather than by a Philistine. Hence the preference is generally given to the reading of 1 Chron. x. 4, which omits the first clause. This makes the wounded king dread the possibility of being taken alive to be made a mock or sport of,

not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took his
sword, and fell upon it. And when his armourbearer 5
saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell upon his sword,
and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, 6
and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day
together. And when the men of Israel that were on 7
the other side of the valley, and they that were beyond
Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and
his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled;
and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philis- 8
tines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and
his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off 9
his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the
land of the Philistines round about, to carry the tidings
unto the house of their idols, and to the people. And 10
they put his armour in the house of the Ashtaroth: and
they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. And 11

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like Samson, by the Philistines. Cases of suicide are remarkably rare in Scripture, cf. 2 Sam xvii. 23 (Ahithophel), 1 Kings xvi. 18 (Zimri), Matt. xxvii. 5 (Judas Iscariot). The later views on the subject of suicide will be found in Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, III. viii. 5.

7. on the other side of the valley: the country to the north of the valley of Jezreel (cf. Hos. i. 5). The next clause is wanting in Chronicles (which see), and should be dropped here, as it is extremely improbable that the Philistines occupied (see end of verse) any part of the trans-Jordanic territory.

9. unto the house of their idols: the original and more expressive reading is that of Chronicles and the LXX, which omits 'the house of.'

10. the house of the Ashtaroth: rather, 'the temple of Astarte,' probably at Ashkelon (Herod. i. 105). The Chronicler records that 'they fastened his skull to the house of Dagon,' but this appears to be merely a false reading of the latter half of this verse.

Beth-shan: the modern *Beisān*, an important centre commanding the Jordan valley and the valley of Jezreel. The spot selected was probably above the principal gate, opening on the

when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard concerning him that which the Philistines had done to Saul,
12 all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan; and they came to Jabesh, and
13 burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

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sûk, or market-place, *outside* the walls. Hence the practicability of the exploit recorded 2 Sam. xxi. 12 (which see).

11 ff. These verses tell of the gratitude of the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had not forgotten what they owed to Saul (xi. 1 ff.).

12. and burnt them there: it is impossible that this can be the true reading. The idea of burning dead bodies was altogether abhorrent to the eschatological thought of the time (Amos ii. 1). Read, with Klostermann, Budde, and others, by a slight change: 'and made lamentation for them there,' the invariable prelude to burial (xxv. 1, xxviii. 3). This involves reading 'and they took their bodies' in verse 13. After the corrupt reading 'burnt them' had crept in, the substitution of 'bones' for 'bodies' will have been made more easy by the note in 2 Sam. xxi. 12, where the mention of 'the bones of Saul and Jonathan' is quite in place.

13. and fasted seven days: for fasting as an expression of mourning, cf. 2 Sam. i. 12, iii. 35, and xii. 16.

THE

SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

[M] AND it came to pass after the death of Saul, when **1**
David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites,

D. 2 Sam. i–viii. *David installed as King, first of Judah, then of all Israel.*

The first and more detailed portion of this subdivision tells the story of seven eventful years in the life of David. The authority is still in the main the early document which forms, as we have seen, the groundwork of the whole of the second division of the Books of Samuel. After recording David's elevation to the throne of the reunited kingdom, the compiler contents himself with giving a number of historical extracts somewhat loosely joined together, and finally brings his book to a close with a summary record of David's wars and of the chief officials of his court (see Introduction, sects. iv and v). Ch. vii is of an entirely different cast from the rest, and, as will appear, comes from a source apart. The whole falls naturally into five sections, the extent and contents of which are given below.

(*a*) Ch. i. *How David received the tidings of Saul's death, with his lament over Saul and Jonathan.*

In the first part of this chapter we have an account of the manner of Saul's death, which in several points contradicts that given in the preceding chapter (see the notes). The explanation that first occurs to one is that the Amalekite youth, prowling on the battlefield in search of loot, came upon the body of Saul *after* the events of 1 Sam. xxxi. 4 f., but *before* the Philistines had arrived 'on the morrow to strip the slain' (*ibid.* 8). Taking the crown and the armlet from the person of the dead king, he carried these in all haste to David, for whose benefit, in the hope of a substantial reward (see iv. 10), *he concocted the story of the text.* A closer examination, however, throws grave doubts upon this, in itself plausible, relation of the two accounts—the one, fact, the other, falsehood. (1) Nothing in the narrative gives the slightest indication that the messenger was romancing; (2) the trustworthy passage, iv. 9 ff.—from the same source as ch. xxxi—which compares the deserts of this Amalekite with those of the murderers of Ish-bosheth, does not represent the former as claiming to have

2 and David had abode two days in Ziklag; it came even
to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out
of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth
upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David,
3 that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance. And David
said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said
4 unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped. And
David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee,
tell me. And he answered, The people are fled from the
battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead;
5 and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. And David
said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou
6 that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead? [T] And the
young man that told him said, As I happened by chance
upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear;
and, lo, the chariots and the horsemen followed hard after
7 him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and

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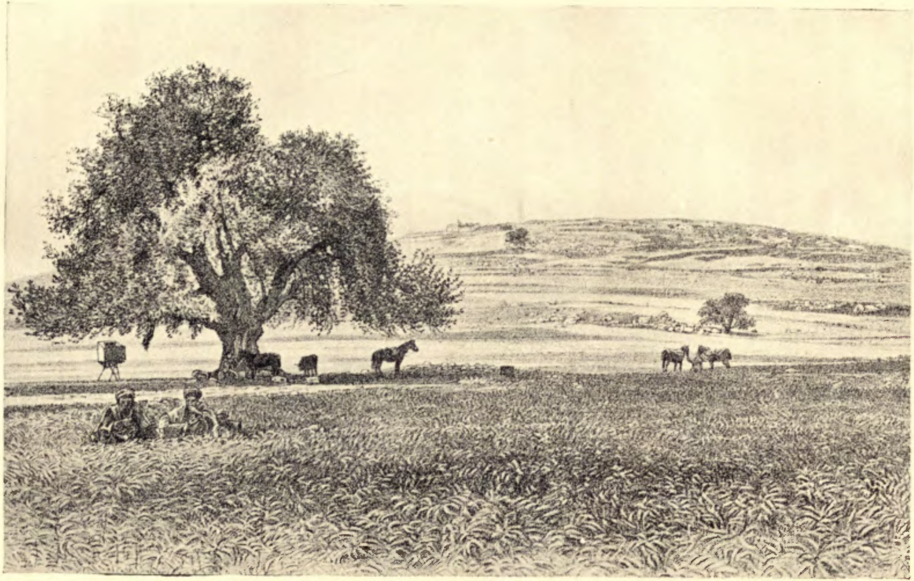
killed Saul, which would have made the comparison still more apposite. Indeed the words of iv. 11, 'how much more,' seem to exclude this possibility, and in the previous verse David claims to have slain the Amalekite with his own hand (contrast i. 15). On the whole, therefore, it is better with almost all recent critics to regard verses 6–10, 13–16, at least, as representing a variant tradition regarding the last moments of the unfortunate king, and David's reception of the messenger. Verse 5 will then form the editorial joining of the two sources, M and T, while 1–4, 11, 12, 17 ff. will represent a fairly continuous narrative, in which Jonathan is throughout associated with Saul, and from which the Amalekite has disappeared.

2. a man came out of the camp: presumably a Hebrew soldier. Cf. the identical description of the messenger in 1 Sam. iv. 12, and note the similar artistic form of the messages, *ibid.* 17 and verse 4 below. In both cases the reply leads up to a climax, there the capture of the Ark, here the death of Saul and Jonathan.

6 ff. The tradition here inserted gives quite a different picture of Saul's condition at the close of the battle from that found in 1 Sam. xxxi. 3 ff. (1) The chariots and the horsemen take the place of the archers of the older narrative; (2) there Saul is undoubtedly represented as wounded (see note on xxxi. 3), here



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ADULLAM

called unto me. And I answered, Here am I. And he 8
said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am
an Amalekite. And he said unto me, Stand, I pray thee, 9
beside me, and slay me, for anguish hath taken hold of
me; because my life is yet whole in me. So I stood 10
beside him, and slew him, because I was sure that he
could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the
crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was
on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.
[M] Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; 11
and likewise all the men that were with him: and they 12
mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and
for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord,
and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by
the sword. [T] And David said unto the young man that 13
told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the
son of a stranger, an Amalekite. And David said unto 14

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as standing leaning on his spear apparently unhurt (verse 9 end), but seized with giddiness or cramp.

9. The meaning of the word rendered **anguish** is quite uncertain; 'cramp,' and 'dizziness' or 'giddiness' (R.V. marg.) have been proposed. The last clause appears, as we have seen, to indicate that Saul was otherwise uninjured.

10. after that he was fallen: apparently as the result of the giddiness, even as he talked with the Amalekite.

the bracelet: rather, 'armlet,' an ornament worn on the upper part of the arm. The armlet and the diadem are again named together as insignia of royalty in the true text of 2 Kings xi. 12, see Skinner's Commentary (Century Bible).

12. the people of the LORD must here, if the text is correct, denote the army, the Lord's 'consecrated ones' (see on 1 Sam. xiii. 9), but probably, in view of the following clause, we should read with LXX, 'the people of Judah.'

13. I am the son of a stranger (Heb. *gēr*): the technical term for a non-Israelite admitted to a modified civil status with corresponding rights. See 'Stranger and Sojourner,' *EBi.* iv, and Bertholet's standard treatise, *Die Stellung der Israeliten zu den Fremden*, 29 ff., where this passage is fully discussed.

him, How wast thou not afraid to put forth thine hand to
15 destroy the LORD's anointed? And David called one of
the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him.
16 And he smote him that he died. And David said unto
him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath
testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's
anointed.

17 [**M**] And David lamented with this lamentation over
18 Saul and over Jonathan his son: and he bade them

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15 f. The older tradition in iv. 9 f. represents David as personally inflicting the death penalty upon the 'man' (verse 2) for presuming that David would rejoice in his country's loss and for hinting, perhaps, at a suitable reward.

i. 17–27. *David's lament over Saul and Jonathan.*

That David was in truth the author of this noble elegy, as of the shorter lament for Abner (iii. 3 f.), is allowed by all save a few recent critics of the extremer sort. Next to the Song of Deborah in Judges v, it is the oldest surviving specimen of early Hebrew poetry of moderate extent. At first transmitted orally, we may suppose, it found a place in the national collection of poetry, which bore the title of the Book of Jashar (see on verse 18), from which it was probably extracted by the author of M. Unfortunately the text in many places is corrupt beyond hope of recovery. Only a few of the more probable of the emendations suggested by recent scholars can find a place in the brief notes that follow. With all this uncertainty in points of detail, the poem stands out as the genuine outpouring of a noble heart, a heart too great to harbour one selfish thought in this dark hour of his country's humiliation. This Hebrew *In Memoriam* falls easily into two parts. In the first (verses 19–22), the poet gives expression to the thought of the death of Saul and Jonathan as a crowning misfortune to the nation of Israel. In the second (23–27), the personal virtues of the fallen heroes are commemorated, the poem reaching its most personal and most passionate note in David's immortal tribute to the love of his 'brother,' Jonathan.

17. David lamented with this lamentation: better, 'chanted this lament,' in Hebrew 'this *ḳînā*'—the technical term for the lament for the dead chanted by professional mourners (2 Chron. xxxv. 25), usually women (Jer. ix. 7).

18. By inserting the words 'the song of' before 'the bow,' the Revisers have sought to make sense of an unintelligible text, perpetuating an unfounded conjecture that the poem was known teach the children of Judah *the song of* the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jashar.

Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places! 19
How are the mighty fallen!
Tell it not in Gath, 20
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
Ye mountains of Gilboa, 21

---

as 'the song of the bow' from the incidental reference in verse 22. Three points are now generally conceded: (1) the two halves of the verse have been transposed, the second half belonging rather to the preceding verse; (2) the verb 'and he said' (R.V. wrongly: 'and he bade them') must refer to and introduce the lament itself, as in iii. 33; (3) the words that follow this verb are a corruption of the first line or lines of the elegy (see below).

the book of Jashar: R.V. marg. 'the book of The Upright.' No completely satisfactory explanation of the name has yet been found. From the other two extracts from the same source, Joshua x. 12–14 and 1 Kings viii. 12 f. according to the true text (for which see Skinner's Commentary in this series), it was evidently a collection of national poetry, compiled in or soon after the reign of Solomon. The clause, as has just been said, properly forms the conclusion of verse 17.

19. The opening line or *stichos* is almost certainly to be found in the first half of the preceding verse. The poem appears to run in quatrains, and Klostermann's emendation has been generally approved, thus: 'And he said (cf. iii. 33ᵃ):

Hear, O Judah, hard things,
Be grieved, O Israel.
Upon thy heights (lie) the slain;
How are the mighty fallen!'

The changes in the received text required to give this excellent sense do not extend beyond one or two consonants.

20. The second quatrain anticipates the receipt of the evil tidings in the cities of the Philistines, and the songs of the women at the victors' home-coming (cf. 1 Sam. xviii. 6). The two distichs of which it is composed afford an excellent illustration of the parallelism, or repetition of the same thought in a somewhat different form, which is the outstanding characteristic of Hebrew poetry.

Let there be no dew nor rain upon you, neither
fields of offerings:
For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast
away,
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.
22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the
mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
23 Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their
lives,
And in their death they were not divided;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet delicately,

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21. In the third quatrain a curse is pronounced upon the scene of the disaster.

fields of offerings: a doubtful reading, and moreover most inappropriate to the rock-strewn ridge of Gilboa. 'Mountains of death' (Lucian and Old Lat.), or 'fields of death' (H. P. Smith), would be more in place.

not anointed with oil: i.e. to keep the leather in good condition, a trivial thought! Perhaps, with Budde, we should omit 'not,' and read: 'the shield of Saul, (once) anointed with oil,' referring to the formal consecration of the warrior and his weapons at the opening of a campaign (Isa. xxi. 5; see on 1 Sam. xxi. 5).

22. The brave deeds of Saul and Jonathan are now commemorated. The first line of R. V. should be printed in two lines, as the parallelism and the four-line (quatrain) measure require.

23 ff. The second part is devoted to the personal characteristics of the two heroes, first together, then Saul and Jonathan individually. The first distich should be rendered:

Saul and Jonathan, the loved and the lovely,
(As) in life, so in death, they were not divided.

The points of comparison in the second distich are the swiftness and irresistibleness of the heroes' attack.

24. The public lamentation for the dead was the special busi-

Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! 25
Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: 26
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen, 27
And the weapons of war perished!

And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of 2

---

ness of the women, who are here reminded of their share in the spoil which Saul had assigned them.

25. The first distich leads up to the climax of the elegy, the passionate outburst of grief over the untimely fate of Jonathan. The second is now so mutilated as to occupy but a single line, and can only be conjecturally restored. The reference to verse 19 generally found in the words **is slain upon thy high places** is too remote. The same consonants yield 'by thy death (Lucian, Budde) is pierced'; hence we read tentatively:

How are the mighty fallen
  In the midst of the battle!
Jonathan, my heart (?) by thy death
  Is pierced through.

This preserves the alternation of three and two beats characteristic of the Hebrew elegiac verse.

26. The text, as elsewhere, is not free from difficulty. **Jonathan,** in the first line, exceeds the measure and is not required.

27. The lament ends with a couplet repeating the main theme. The parallelism suggests that in **the weapons of war** we have a figure for Saul and Jonathan.

As has frequently been pointed out, the poem is marked by an entire absence of religious feeling. 'The feeling expressed by it is purely human' (Driver), and in this characteristic we have the best guarantee of its genuineness. No later poet, writing when the character of David had begun to be idealized—as was soon the case—would have put into David's mouth sentiments which, exquisitely tender as they are, are so entirely secular.

(*b*) ii—iv. *David, King of Judah in Hebron, and the story of the Civil War.*

The fragmentary nature of the record which the compiler of

the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of
Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And
David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto
2 Hebron. So David went up thither, and his two wives
also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of
3 Nabal the Carmelite. And his men that were with him
did David bring up, every man with his household: and
4 they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. And the men of
Judah came, and there they anointed David king over
the house of Judah.

And they told David, saying, The men of Jabesh-gilead
5 were they that buried Saul. And David sent messengers
unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them,

Samuel has here preserved for us renders it no longer possible to construct a thoroughly consistent account of the events of the critical period during which David made himself master of the united tribes of Israel. Especially difficult is the question of his relations with the victorious Philistines. These, we may be sure, did not stand aside in complacent indifference while David fought his way to the throne. Rather, we must suppose that at first David continued as before in a position of dependence, as king by the grace of the Philistines, and that only when he had strengthened his position by war and diplomacy did he break with his powerful suzerains.

ii. 1–4^{a}. *David anointed in Hebron as king over the house of Judah.*

1. David now, as always before taking any important step in his career, seeks to ascertain the Divine will by means of the ephod-oracle. Note the series of questions as in 1 Sam. xxiii. 2 ff., 9 ff., xxx. 7 f., where see notes.

Hebron, now *El-Khalîl* (the friend)—a contraction for 'the city of the friend of God,' viz. Abraham—about twenty miles by road from Jerusalem, was the chief city of Judah, and, as the name implies, the centre of the league or confederation of the clans of Judah, Caleb, &c.

4. His own clansmen, as we should expect, were the first to recognize in David the man whom the time required. For the significance of the rite of anointing, see on 1 Sam. x. 1.

ii. 4^{b}–7. *David's message of thanks to the men of Jabesh-gilead* (cf. 1 Sam. xxxi. 11 ff. with the notes).

Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have shewed this
kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried
him. And now the Lord shew kindness and truth unto 6
you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because
ye have done this thing. Now therefore let your hands 7
be strong, and be ye valiant: for Saul your lord is dead,
and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over
them.

Now Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, had 8
taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over
to Mahanaim; and he made him king over Gilead, and 9
over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim,
and over Benjamin, and over all Israel. (Ish-bosheth 10
Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign

---

5. this kindness: better, 'this pious act'; the proper burial of the dead was regarded by the Semites, as by other ancient peoples, as a true act of piety.

7. In sending this royal message David was doubtless actuated by motives of policy as well as by gratitude. Here, for the first time, he claims to be Saul's legitimate successor, and hopes for the loyal support of the men of Gilead.

ii. 8–11. *Abner sets up a rival king.*

8. Ish-bosheth: 'man of shame,' a disguised and disfigured form of the name Ish-baal (see 1 Chron. viii. 33, ix. 39). In early times the title *ba'al* (lord) was quite innocently applied to Yahweh, but on account of the associations of the title with the Canaanite deities and their worship (see on 1 Sam. vii. 4) this application was afterwards discontinued. To mark their abhorrence of the name later editors substituted in this and other proper names the word for 'shame.' Cf. Mephibosheth (iv. 4), which shows a double disguise.

Mahanaim lay to the north of the Jabbok (Gen. xxxii. 2), but the exact site is still in dispute. *Maḥneh* and *Ajlun* have the best claims (see the dictionaries). In Solomon's day it was still, as here, the capital of Gilead (1 Kings iv. 14).

9. over the Ashurites: read, 'the Asherites' (Judges i. 32), the men of Asher, the dominant tribe north of the great plain. The 'Geshurites' of R. V. marg. are excluded by the fact that they had their own king (iii. 3).

10 f. The part within parentheses so manifestly breaks the

over Israel, and he reigned two years.) But the house
11 of Judah followed David. And the time that David was
king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years
and six months.

12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of
Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim
13 to Gibeon. And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the
servants of David, went out, and met them by the pool
of Gibeon; and they sat down, the one on the one side
of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.
14 And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men, I pray thee,
arise and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.
15 Then they arose and went over by number; twelve for
Benjamin, and for Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and
16 twelve of the servants of David. And they caught every
one his fellow by the head, and *thrust* his sword in his

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connexion between 9 and 10^b, that it must be taken along with the similar note in verse 11 as an editorial insertion (cf. v. 4 f.). It is very doubtful if Saul could have had a younger son of such mature age. In any case his reign must have more nearly coincided with that of David in Hebron than is here stated.

ii. 12–32. *The first battle of the Civil War and the death of Asahel.*

12. Gibeon: now *El-Jib*, in Benjamin, about six miles north-west of Jerusalem. Probably Ish-bosheth had come to an understanding with the Philistines by which, under their suzerainty, he was acknowledged as king over North Israel. By playing off the two vassal-kings of the north and the south against each other, the Philistines no doubt hoped to maintain their hold over the country.

13. Joab the son of Zeruiah, David's nephew (see on 1 Sam. xxvi. 6)—the first appearance on the scene of David's masterful but devoted general, who plays so prominent a part in the whole after history of the time.

14 f. Abner proposes a display of mimic warfare. Such, rather than a proposal to settle the dispute by a serious combat, seems the meaning of the words used. Unfortunately the mimic display turned to stern reality.

16. The two parties, apparently, were to contend in pairs, a man from either side. But at the first onset each combatant fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon. And the battle was very sore that day; and Abner was 17 beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David. And the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, 18 and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe. And Asahel pursued after Abner; 19 and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. Then Abner looked behind 20 him, and said, Is it thou, Asahel? And he answered, It is I. And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy 21 right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him. And Abner 22 said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? Howbeit 23 he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him in the belly, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died

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treacherously 'caught his opponent by the head with his hand' (so LXX), and plunged his sword into his side, the whole twenty-four falling together.

Helkath-hazzurim: 'the field of sword-edges' (Driver; cf. R. V. marg. and Ps. lxxxix. 43). The LXX read Helkath-hazzodim 'the field of the plotters,' which is more appropriate.

17. On seeing the tragic issue of the 'play,' the main body of troops on either side at once joined battle. The narrator's interest, however, is centred in an incident that followed, out of which were to develop important results for the future.

21 ff. Asahel rejects the advice of the older and more experienced swordsman to be content with a lesser prey, and falls a victim to his rashness.

23. with the hinder end of the spear: read, by a slight change, 'Abner smote him with a backward stroke,' &c. (Klostermann). Without slackening his pace, Abner delivers a powerful thrust backwards with his long sharp-pointed spear, piercing his pursuer through and through.

in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as
came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood
24 still. But Joab and Abishai pursued after Abner: and
the sun went down when they were come to the hill of
Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilder-
25 ness of Gibeon. And the children of Benjamin gathered
themselves together after Abner, and became one band,
26 and stood on the top of an hill. Then Abner called to
Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? know-
est thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?
how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return
27 from following their brethren? And Joab said, As God
liveth, if thou hadst not spoken, surely then in the
morning the people had gone away, nor followed every
28 one his brother. So Joab blew the trumpet, and all the
people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more,
29 neither fought they any more. And Abner and his men
went all that night through the Arabah; and they passed
over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and came to
30 Mahanaim. And Joab returned from following Abner:
and when he had gathered all the people together, there
lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel.

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24. The topography is obscured by the uncertainty of the text. Neither **the hill of Ammah** nor **Giah** is mentioned elsewhere.

25. on the top of an hill: read, 'on the top of the hill of Ammah.'

26. Abner appeals to Joab to stay the pursuit and so prevent further bloodshed. The Revisers, by their marginal reference to Abner's proposal in verse 14, interpret Joab's answer as throwing the blame for the day's work on the former. The context, however, shows that 'Joab, though ruthless, is not altogether without conscience,' since he declares that, but for Abner's intervention now, he would have continued the pursuit until next morning.

29. through (i. e. along) **the Arabah** or Jordan valley (see on 1 Sam. xxiii. 24). Crossing the Jordan they followed the course of the **Bithron** (*lit.* 'ravine'), probably a narrow valley at the head of which stood Mahanaim (cf. verse 8 above).

But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and 31
of Abner's men, *so that* three hundred and threescore
men died. And they took up Asahel, and buried him 32
in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Beth-lehem.
And Joab and his men went all night, and the day brake
upon them at Hebron.

[**R**] Now there was long war between the house of Saul **3**
and the house of David: and David waxed stronger and
stronger, but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.
And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his 2
firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; and 3
his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the
Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah
the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; and the fourth, 4
Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah
the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, of Eglah 5
David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

[**M**] And it came to pass, while there was war between 6
the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner

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iii. **1.** A statement, probably from the pen of the compiler, summarizing the fuller record of the Civil War which lay before him in his source (M).

2–5. A family register (1 Chron. iii. 1–4) similar to that given v. 13–16, both owing their present form, in all probability, to the compiler (R). In addition to the two wives whom he had at the date of his installation (ii. 2), David took to himself other four, each of the six bearing him one son. The eldest was **Amnon,** whom we shall meet later (xiii. 1 ff.); **Chileab** has the same consonants as Caleb, recalling the fact that his mother was of the clan of the Calebites (1 Sam. xxv. 3). **Adonijah** became in the course of events Solomon's rival for the throne (1 Kings i. 4 ff.).

3. Geshur: a petty kingdom in the district now known as the *Jaulân*, N. E. of the Sea of Galilee (cf. on x. 6).

iii. 6–16. *Abner's quarrel with Ish-baal and its consequences.*

6. Abner made himself strong in the house of Saul: the precise meaning is doubtful; either, as R.V. marg., he was

7 made himself strong in the house of Saul. Now Saul had
a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of
Aiah: and *Ish-bosheth* said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou
8 gone in unto my father's concubine? Then was Abner
very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, Am I
a dog's head that belongeth to Judah? This day do I
shew kindness unto the house of Saul thy father, to his
brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee
into the hand of David, and yet thou chargest me this
9 day with a fault concerning this woman. God do so to
Abner, and more also, if, as the LORD hath sworn to
10 David, I do not even so to him; to translate the
kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the
throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan
11 even to Beer-sheba. And he could not answer Abner
another word, because he feared him.

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a tower of strength in defence of the house of Saul, a sense which the verb has in x. 12 ('let us play the man for'), or showed himself powerful, overbearing in connexion with the house or party of Saul. The latter gives a better introduction to the particular case of arrogance about to be related.

7 f. Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: the heroine of the tragedy of ch. xxi. Ish-baal's remonstrance was no doubt based on other than moral grounds (see note on xii. 8), although it suited Abner to affect to regard it as a trifling affair of morals, which should never have been brought up against a man of his position and merits.

8. that belongeth to Judah: wanting in LXX, and generally regarded as an addition here by a scribe who read *keleb* (dog) as *kālеb*—the old Hebrew text had no vowels —i. e. Caleb, the clan afterwards incorporated with the tribe of Judah.

concerning this woman: better, with LXX, 'concerning a woman,' a mere peccadillo, as explained above.

9 f. as the LORD hath sworn to David: no trace of the promise here referred to (cf. verse 18, v. 2) is now found in this document (M). Budde would connect it with the unrecorded oracle given by Ahimelech, see 1 Sam. xxii. 10, 13, 15.

11. A brief but significant illustration of the character and position of this *roi fainéant*.

And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, 12
saying, Whose is the land? saying *also*, Make thy league
with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to
bring about all Israel unto thee. And he said, Well; I 13
will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of
thee, that is, thou shalt not see my face, except thou first
bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see
my face. And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth 14
Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, whom I
betrothed to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.
And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her 15
husband, even from Paltiel the son of Laish. And her 16
husband went with her, weeping as he went, and followed
her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return:
and he returned.

And Abner had communication with the elders of 17
Israel, saying, In times past ye sought for David to be king
over you: now then do it: for the LORD hath spoken of 18
David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will
save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines,

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12. Smarting under the insult of his puppet-king, Abner opens communications with David. With Klostermann and Budde we should probably read thus: 'And Abner sent messengers to David, saying, Under my hand (a slight emendation of **on his behalf**) is the land to give it to whom I please.' This forms an admirable introduction to what follows, and is in keeping with Abner's estimate of himself in the preceding verses.

13. David makes the restoration of Michal the indispensable preliminary to further negotiations. Apart from the question of legal rights, this demand was a matter of sound policy as strengthening his claim to be recognized as Saul's successor.

15. Paltiel the son of Laish: see on 1 Sam. xxv. 44.

16. A masterly miniature with its inimitable contrast between the meek, broken-hearted husband and the curt, unsympathetic soldier. For **Bahurim** see on xvi. 5, xvii. 20.

iii. 17–27. *The progress of the negotiations, ending in the treacherous murder of Abner by Joab.*

19 and out of the hand of all their enemies. And Abner
also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also
to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed
20 good to Israel, and to the whole house of Benjamin. So
Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with
him. And David made Abner and the men that were
21 with him a feast. And Abner said unto David, I will
arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the
king, that they may make a covenant with thee, and that
thou mayest reign over all that thy soul desireth. And
22 David sent Abner away; and he went in peace. And,
behold, the servants of David and Joab came from a
foray, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner
was not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him
23 away, and he was gone in peace. When Joab and all
the host that was with him were come, they told Joab,
saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he
24 hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. Then
Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done?
behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it that thou hast
25 sent him away, and he is quite gone? Thou knowest
Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and
to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know
26 all that thou doest. And when Joab was come out from
David, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought

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19. Saul's tribe of Benjamin is specially mentioned, as the quarter from which opposition to Abner's proposals was most to be expected.

24 f. The first of several occasions on which Joab's masterful spirit asserts itself in an inexcusable freedom of speech and action in relation to his sovereign. There was no ground, so far as is now known, for this charge of *mala fides* on Abner's part. It is by no means improbable that David, knowing Joab's jealous and vindictive character, had purposely arranged that he should be absent on the occasion of Abner's visit.

him back from the well of Sirah: but David knew it not.
And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took 27
him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him
quietly, and smote him there in the belly, that he died,
for the blood of Asahel his brother. And afterward 28
when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are
guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of
Abner the son of Ner: let it fall upon the head of Joab, 29
and upon all his father's house; and let there not fail
from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is
a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth by the
sword, or that lacketh bread. So Joab and Abishai his 30
brother slew Abner, because he had killed their brother
Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

And David said to Joab, and to all the people that 31

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27. into the midst of the gate: the most public spot in the city is not the place for a 'quiet word' with any one. Read, with LXX, 'to the side of the gate,' into a retired corner. The only motive for this act of treachery given by the narrator is that of blood revenge (for which see on xiv. 7), but we can scarcely leave jealousy out of account, nor—to be perfectly just to one who with all his faults was passionately devoted to David's cause—a mistaken zeal for what he considered the best interests of his king (see verse 25).

iii. 28-39. *David protests his innocence and gives Abner honourable burial.*

David follows up his solemn denial of complicity in the murder of Abner by an exhaustive curse on the murderer and all his kin. The reference to his 'kingdom' shows, further, that he was alive to the misconstruction which might be put upon his apparent breach of faith by public opinion generally, and especially by the northern tribes.

29. that leaneth on a staff: rather, 'that holdeth a spindle.' There is an evident appropriateness in the wish that the descendants of the stern soldier may be womanish and effeminate. Loathsome disease, effeminacy, bloodshed, and poverty compose the elements of this terrible imprecation.

30 interrupts the narrative, contradicts verse 27, and is therefore regarded on all hands as an interpolation.

were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David
32 followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of
33 Abner; and all the people wept. And the king lamented for Abner, and said,

Should Abner die as a fool dieth?
34 Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters:
As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall.

35 And all the people wept again over him. And all the people came to cause David to eat bread while it was yet day; but David sware, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or aught else, till the sun be
36 down. And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the
37 people. So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of
38 Ner. And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in

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33 f. The lament is in the form of a quatrain (see on i. 17 ff.). Instead of the usual parallelism of successive lines, the first line here corresponds to the fourth, the second to the third, the first line of verse 34 in R. V. being really the second and third of the quatrain.

Should Abner die, &c.: rather, 'had Abner to die as dies the fool,' that is, in dishonour, in contrast to the honourable death of the warrior. Abner's death was murder, and the pity of it was increased by the treachery which prevented him raising a hand in self-defence, although both hands and feet were unfettered.

36 f. The narrator is at pains to show that David succeeded in clearing himself of all suspicion of complicity in the murder, not only in the eyes of his own people, but also in the eyes of 'all Israel.'

38 f. After a generous tribute to the worth of Abner, David—in a verse the first part of which has been variously interpreted—excuses his inability to secure the punishment of Joab. This

Israel? And I am this day weak, though anointed king; 39
and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the
Lord reward the wicked doer according to his wickedness.

And when *Ish-bosheth*, Saul's son, heard that Abner 4
was dead in Hebron, his hands became feeble, and all the
Israelites were troubled. And *Ish-bosheth*, Saul's son, 2
had two men that were captains of bands: the name of
the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab,
the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of
Benjamin: (for Beeroth also is reckoned to Benjamin:
and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and have been 3
sojourners there until this day.)

Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of 4
his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came
of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took

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he has perforce to leave in the hand of God, whom he prays to 'requite the doer of evil according to his evil.'

iv. 1–12. *The assassination of Ish-baal* (*Ish-bosheth*).

On hearing of the murder of Abner, Ish-baal and his supporters realize that their cause is lost. The unfortunate prince is subsequently assassinated by two of his officers, who bring his head to David in the hope of a reward, but are treated as common criminals.

2. Beeroth: usually identified with *El-bireh*, on the great north road, a short distance south-east of Beth-el. The purpose of the parenthesis is to explain how the Canaanite inhabitants of Beeroth, which was originally a member of the Gibeonite league (Josh. ix. 17) and an *enclave* within Benjamin, had been compelled for some reason to flee to **Gittaim**, an unknown locality, where they long enjoyed the rights of hospitality as sojourners (see on i. 13). Some would bring this incident into connexion with Saul's cruel treatment of the Gibeonites as recorded in xxi. 1 ff., and see in the murder of Ish-baal by Baanah and Rechab an act of vengeance.

4. Mephibosheth: really either Merib-baal, 'the lord (i. e. Yahweh) contends,' as 1 Chron. viii. 34, ix. 40^a, or more probably Meri-baal, 'the lord's (Yahweh's) hero,' as in the Hebrew text of 1 Chron. ix. 40^b. For the motive of the double disguise see on ii. 8, and for Meri-baal's subsequent history, ix. 1 ff.

him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the
6 house of Ish-bosheth, as he took his rest at noon. And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him in the belly: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.
7 Now when they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and went by the way
8 of the Arabah all night. And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged
9 my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed. And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all

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iv. 5-7 give details of the assassination. The Hebrew text of verse 6 is very corrupt, that of the Greek Version being now universally preferred. As given in the marg. of R. V. it runs: 'And, behold, the woman that kept the door of the house was winnowing [rather, 'was cleaning'] wheat, and she slumbered and slept; and the brethren, Rechab and Baanah, went privily into the house, as he lay,' &c., as in verse 7. This picturesque description throws an interesting light on the low estate to which his Majesty, King Ish-baal, had fallen.

7. by the way of the Arabah: in the opposite direction to the line of Abner's retreat, see ii. 29.

8. the LORD hath avenged my lord the king, &c.: 'the apparent hypocrisy which made Yahweh a partner in their bloody crime called forth the indignation of the older expositors. But such language is second nature to an Oriental' (H. P. Smith).

9. The second half of this verse shows how even our oldest extant Hebrew literature is suffused with true religious feeling.

adversity, when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, 10
thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him,
and slew him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him
for his tidings. How much more, when wicked men 11
have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his
bed, shall I not now require his blood of your hand, and
take you away from the earth? And David commanded 12
his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their
hands and their feet, and hanged them up beside the
pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth,
and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto 5
Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and

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10 f. David serves the murderers of Ish-baal as he had served the messenger from the field of Gilboa. The latter—who must not be confused with the Amalekite of i. 6 ff. (see the introductory note to that chapter)—paid with his life for what after all was little more than an error of judgement, 'how much more' (verse 11) had these confessed assassins incurred the penalty of death.

(*c*) v. 1—vi. 23. *David, now king over all Israel, captures Jerusalem to which he removes the Ark of God.*

In these chapters we have a record from our oldest source of two historical events, the importance of which for the future political and religious development of Israel can scarcely be exaggerated. Chapter v is evidently of the nature of a compilation from more detailed accounts of this critical period of Hebrew history. As a consequence, the chronological relation of the different entries is extremely uncertain (see especially on verses 17 ff.). The student is referred to the standard histories and to Budde's *Kurzer Handcommentar* 218 for further examination of the historical problems.

v. 1–3. *David anointed king over Israel in Hebron* (cf. ii. 4).

Accepting the arrangement of the text adopted by the compiler, we find the northern tribes, here designated 'the tribes of Israel' as distinguished from the tribe of Judah, repairing to Hebron to offer David, through their representatives 'the elders,' or heads of the clans, the crown now vacant through the murder of Ish-baal.

1. we are thy bone and thy flesh: for this idea of the solidarity of Judah and the northern tribes, cf. ii. 26, 'their brethren,' xix. 41, 'our brethren the men of Judah.'

2 thy flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it
was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and
the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel,
3 and thou shalt be prince over Israel. So all the elders
of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David
made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD:
and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 [R] David was thirty years old when he began to reign,
5 and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over
Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem
he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and
6 Judah. [M] And the king and his men went to Jerusalem

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2. The reference in the first half of the verse is to David's military leadership under Saul, in the second half probably to the same oracle as was referred to in iii. 9. The Chronicler (1 Chron. xi. 3) naturally understood the words as referring to the later passage, 1 Sam. xvi. 1 ff.

Thou shalt feed my people Israel: the earliest instance of this metaphor, the king the shepherd of his people; it became a favourite figure from Jeremiah onwards.

3. David made a covenant with them (cf. iii. 21): embodying the mutual rights and duties of ruler and ruled, the 'manner of the kingdom' (see on 1 Sam. viii. 9).

4 f. A chronological note by the Deuteronomic editor of the same tenor as that in 1 Kings ii. 11 (cf. ii. 11 above). Its accuracy is guaranteed by general considerations (see Introduction, sect. ix), and by the precision of the text 'seven years and six months.'

v. 6-10. *The capture of Jerusalem* (cf. 1 Chron. xi. 4-9).

This famous fortress had remained since the conquest in the possession of the Canaanite tribe of the Jebusites (Judges i. 21). The fragmentary character of the extracts in this chapter render it impossible to say with certainty at what precise point in David's reign this epoch-making event took place (see above). The compiler at least represents it as the first notable event of David's reign over all Israel. See further on verse 17 below and on vi. 1.

6. Jerusalem: the first historical mention of this famous city is found in the Tell-el-Amarna correspondence, *circa* 1400 B.C., where it appears as *U-ru-sa-lim* with a native ruler under the suzerainty of Egypt. For the meaning of the name, its situation and history, reference must be made to the standard dictionaries.

against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless 7
David took the strong hold of Zion; the same is the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever 8
smiteth the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and *smite* the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul. Wherefore they say, There are the blind and

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the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: one of the seven races which, according to O. T. writers, occupied the land of Canaan before the Hebrew conquest (see Driver's *Deuteronomy*, 97 ff.). In Judges xix. 10, 1 Chron. xi. 4 f. their capital is called Jebus, probably a mistaken inference from the name of its inhabitants. The Jebusites' taunt is explained by the narrator as referring to the impregnable position of the fortress. This idea is more clearly brought out by the marginal rendering: 'thou shalt not come in hither, but the blind and the lame shall turn thee away.' The walls, they meant, were so strong that it was sufficient to man them with the blind and the lame to secure the safety of the city.

7. the strong hold of Zion: Zion is now identified with the more easterly of the two hills on which the modern city is built. The fortress must have stood on its southern portion, doubtless in close proximity to the only perennial spring in the neighbourhood, the Virgin's Fountain. With later writers, the poets especially, Zion became a synonym for Jerusalem as a whole. There is nothing in the text, which represents Zion as the citadel of Jerusalem, to negative the supposition that part at least of the western hill—often falsely supposed to be Zion—was already built upon.

the same is the city of David: a marginal gloss anticipating verse 9.

8. The first half of this verse is so corrupt as to have been long the despair of textual critics. No purpose would be served by a recital of the bewildering variety of conjectures that have been put forward. The second half has all the appearance of a late and mistaken gloss to be rendered as in the margin: 'the blind and the lame shall not come into the house,' that is, the temple, as expressly stated in the LXX rendering. There is here probably a reference to Lev. xxi. 18. According to the Chronicler (1 Chron.

9 the lame; he cannot come into the house. And David dwelt in the strong hold, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.
10 And David waxed greater and greater; for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they
12 built David an house. And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

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xi. 6), Joab's prowess on this occasion procured for him the position of commander-in-chief of David's forces.

9. And David dwelt in the strong hold: in these few and commonplace words we have all that is recorded of the momentous step taken by David in removing his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem. That it was a wise and politic move on David's part none can doubt. By its almost impregnable position, and by its geographical situation on the dividing line between Judah and Israel, Jerusalem was marked out as the natural capital of the united kingdom. The removal of the royal residence from the Judahite city of Hebron, moreover, was a step likely to conciliate the tribes of the north, while the fact that Jerusalem was a new conquest, in which the men of Judah had played an honourable part, would go far to mitigate the regrets of the south at this desertion of their ancient city (but see on xv. 7 ff.).

the city of David: rather, as the context requires, 'the fortress of David' or 'David's burg'; so vi. 12, &c.

Millo was evidently an important part of the fortress, although meaning and situation are both unknown. See Skinner's note on 1 Kings ix. 15 (Century Bible).

10. Cf. note on iv. 9 above.

11 ff. Hiram king of Tyre: Hiram I, the friend and contemporary of Solomon, whose reign is given by ancient and modern authorities as 968–935, B.C. (see Menander's list in *KAT.*^{3} 129). If this date is correct, we must suppose that the name of Hiram has been inadvertently inserted here for that of his father Abibaal. The extreme condensation of the narrative has probably brought together what should be kept apart. The ambassadors of Hiram were no doubt those usually sent with friendly greetings at the beginning of a new reign (see x. 1 f.). By them, we may suppose, David sent a request for materials for his palace and for the necessary craftsmen.

[**R**] And David took him more concubines and wives 13
out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and
there were yet sons and daughters born to David. And 14
these be the names of those that were born unto him in
Jerusalem; Shammua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and
Solomon, and Ibhar, and Elishua; and Nepheg, and 15
Japhia; and Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphelet. 16

[**M**] And when the Philistines heard that they had 17
anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up
to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down

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v. 13–16. *A list of David's sons born in Jerusalem.*

The list is repeated with some variations (for which see the tabular lists in Driver, *Notes* 201) in 1 Chron. iii. 5–8, xiv. 4–7, and, in all probability, originally formed, as in Chronicles, the continuation of iii. 2–5. Of the names given, we may note only **Solomon**, the circumstances of whose birth are fully related below (xi. f.), and **Eliada,** whose true name was Baal-iada (1 Chron. xiv. 7). The motive for the change has been explained in the note on ii. 8.

v. 17–25. *David and the Philistines.*

It is altogether probable, as we have seen (p. 198), that David while at Hebron continued to acknowledge the Philistine suzerainty over Judah, one trace of which we may perhaps find in the presence, at the date of the section before us, of a Philistine resident (or garrison, or both) at Beth-lehem (xxiii. 14). But David as the head of a united Israel was many times more dangerous than as the king of Judah alone. His installation, therefore, at Hebron recorded in the opening verses of this chapter seems to have changed the attitude of the Philistines from one of watchful tolerance to one of active hostility. The reason for believing that David had not yet achieved the conquest of Jerusalem, and consequently that v. 4–10 and v. 17—vi. 1 have changed places, will appear presently.

17. David . . . went down to the hold: David's place of retreat cannot, as the present context suggests, be 'the strong hold of Zion.' One always 'went up,' one never 'went down,' to Jerusalem, and besides David was already settled 'in the strong hold' (verse 9). The solution of the difficulty is to be found in the episode preserved in the appendix to Samuel, xxiii. 11ff. The scene of the exploit there recorded is the same as that of the

18 to the hold. Now the Philistines had come and spread
19 themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David inquired
of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the
LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will certainly deliver
20 the Philistines into thine hand. And David came to
Baal-perazim, and David smote them there; and he said,
The LORD hath broken mine enemies before me, like the
breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that
21 place Baal-perazim. And they left their images there,
and David and his men took them away.

22 And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread
23 themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And when David
inquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up:
make a circuit behind them, and come upon them over

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section before us, 'the valley of Rephaim,' David being then in 'the hold of Adullam' (xxiii. 13—for this rendering in place of the erroneous 'cave' see on 1 Sam. xxii. 1). David, then, retired from Hebron, not Jerusalem, to his old fortress of Adullam.

18. the valley of Rephaim lay to the south of Jerusalem towards Beth-lehem (Josh. xv. 8; cf. xxiii. 13 ff. below).

20. Baal-perazim: 'Baal (or lord) of breaches,' as explained in the second half of the verse. This shows once more that Baal was at this period an unobjectionable title of Yahweh. The locality has not been identified.

21. David carries off the 'gods' of the Philistines, which the latter had taken into battle with them, as the Hebrews took the Ark at Eben-ezer (1 Sam. iv. 5 ff.). The reading 'gods' for **images** is attested by the LXX and by 1 Chron. xiv. 12. The form which this verse has assumed in Chronicles is instructive. The Chronicler has taken offence at the idea of the man after God's heart carrying off, as trophies of war, a set of heathen gods, and has made David give commandment (cf. Deut. vii. 5, 25), 'and they were burned with fire'! This is one of many illustrations of the manner in which the pious historians of a later age dealt with certain passages of the older literature. An illustration of an Assyrian warrior with a captured idol in his hand will be found *EBi.* ii. col. 1918.

22. The scene of this second encounter is again the valley of Rephaim.

against the mulberry trees. And it shall be, when thou 24
hearest the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry
trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then is the
LORD gone out before thee to smite the host of the
Philistines. And David did so, as the LORD com- 25
manded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until
thou come to Gezer.

And David again gathered together all the chosen men 6

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23 f. mulberry trees: R. V. marg. 'balsam trees'; better than either would be 'baka trees,' keeping the original form of the word, since the authorities are not agreed as to the tree in question. The belief in trees as the abodes of divine beings, and as media of divination and revelation, was deeply rooted in early Semitic thought (W. R. Smith, *Rel. Sem.*^{2} 195 ff.).

25. from Geba until thou come to Gezer: the LXX and the Chronicler (note R. V. marg.) read 'Gibeon' for Geba here. For the former see on ii. 12, for the latter, 1 Sam. xiii. 2. But this part of Palestine was full of Gebas, Gibeahs and Gibeons—all practically synonymous—and some place nearer Jerusalem and the valley of Rephaim than either Geba or Gibeon may be intended. The site of the ancient Canaanite city of **Gezer** is represented by *Tell Jezer*—otherwise *Tell ej-Jesari*—near the modern village of Abu Shusheh, south-east of Ramleh. It first appears in the Amarna correspondence, *circa* 1400 B. C. More than four centuries later it was presented by the then king of Egypt as a dowry to his daughter, the wife of Solomon (1 Kings ix. 16). It is now (1904) being excavated by the Palestine Exploration Society. The history of Jezer has been fully treated by Clermont Ganneau in his *Archaeological Researches in Palestine*, ii. 224-275; a *résumé* by Macalister will be found in the *Quarterly Statement* of the above Society for 1902, pp. 227 ff.

vi. 1-19. *The transference of the Ark from Kiriath-jearim to the city of David.*

If the selection of Jerusalem as the capital of the united kingdom of Israel was, as is universally admitted, a conspicuous proof of David's statesmanship, it is evident that the decision to convey thither, and to house within its citadel, the sacred Ark of God is equally a proof of his political sagacity and religious zeal. The possession of the ancient palladium of the tribes of Israel gave the new metropolis the necessary religious sanction, and gradually secured for it a pre-eminence among the sanctuaries of the land which in due time paved the way for the Deuteronomic

2 of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went

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centralization of the cultus, with all the far-reaching results that flowed therefrom. It is all the more to be regretted that our extant records throw so little light upon the inexplicable neglect of the Ark during the long lifetime of Samuel and the reign of Saul. That this precious shrine, whose presence was as the presence of Yahweh, and whose loss was the passing of the glory from Israel (1 Sam. iv. 21), should have played no part in the revival of national and religious life which culminated in the institution of the monarchy, is surely to be explained only by the hypothesis that the Ark was inaccessible to the leaders we have named, and to all who rallied round them. Of this inaccessibility no other explanation seems possible than the further supposition, that during all these years the Ark in some way or other continued to be jealously retained within the jurisdiction, though not within the actual territory, of the Philistines. Its ultimate recovery, we cannot doubt, stands in close connexion with David's repeated victories over the latter. *Only when their power had been completely broken was it possible for Israel to regain possession of the Ark.* The subject is too complex to admit of adequate treatment in a note, and its fuller discussion must be relegated to the Appendix to this commentary.

The parallel account of the removal of the Ark in 1 Chron. xiii. 5 ff. should be compared with that given here. 'The variations between the two narratives are here remarkably striking and instructive' (Driver).

1. In his recent commentary, Budde still adheres to the opinion expressed in his earlier works on Samuel that this verse was originally followed by v. 6 ff., the account of the conquest of Jerusalem, and that v. 12 gives the justification of and introduction to vi. 2 ff. This mainly on the ground that an army of thirty thousand men 'does not suggest a festival procession, but a serious warlike undertaking.' As will be shown more fully in the Appendix, we consider Budde's premise correct, but his conclusion false. Both the form (note the words '*again* gathered together') and the contents of this verse clearly suggest another military expedition against the Philistines, while the fresh start made in verse 2 equally suggests that something has fallen out between these verses. This we take to have been an account of the success of the expedition, which put an end to the Philistine suzerainty over the cities of the Gibeonite league, including Kiriath-jearim, and thereby opened the way for the recovery of the Ark. This account the compiler will have suppressed under the misapprehension that the Ark, because of its location on nominally Hebrew territory, had all along been under Hebrew control.

with all the people that were with him, from Baale Judah,
to bring up from thence the ark of God, which is called
by the Name, even the name of the LORD of hosts that
sitteth upon the cherubim. And they set the ark of God 3
upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of
Abinadab that was in the hill: and Uzzah and Ahio, the
sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. And they brought 4
it out of the house of Abinadab, which was in the hill,
with the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.
And David and all the house of Israel played before the 5
LORD with all manner of *instruments made of* fir wood,
and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels,
and with castanets, and with cymbals. And when they 6
came to the threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah put forth
his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the
oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled 7
against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error;

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2. from Baale Judah: read, 'to Baalah of Judah to bring up from thence,' &c.; cf. 1 Chron. xiii. 6, 'to Baalah, *that is* Kiriath-jearim,' the name which the place bears in 1 Sam. vi. 21 f.

which is called by the Name, &c.: render more literally, 'over which is called the name of Yahweh Sebaoth,' reading 'the name' once only as in LXX. The phrase denotes ownership (see on xii. 28). For the expanded title, which has been added later, see the Appendix.

3 f. The awkwardness of the style shows that the text of these two verses is in some confusion, cf. 1 Chron. xiii. 7.

5. with all manner . . . of fir wood (the words omitted are, as the italics show, no part of the text): an interesting example of textual corruption involving only slight deviations from the original text, which ran: 'with all (their) might and with songs,' as 1 Chron. xiii. 8. For the instruments employed see the Bible dictionaries.

6. the oxen stumbled: the meaning of the original, as the margin shows, is uncertain.

7. for his error: R. V. marg. 'for his rashness,' but the text is palpably corrupt, and probably a mutilated fragment of what the Chronicler read in his copy: 'because he put forth his hand to the Ark, and he died before God' (1 Chron. xiii. 10). The last

8 and there he died by the ark of God. And David was
displeased, because the LORD had broken forth upon
Uzzah: and he called that place Perez-uzzah, unto this
9 day. And David was afraid of the LORD that day; and
he said, How shall the ark of the LORD come unto me?
10 So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto
him into the city of David; but David carried it aside
11 into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark
of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the
Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom,
12 and all his house. And it was told king David, saying,
The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and
all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God.

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clause in the form just given is also more likely to represent the original, reading, however, 'the LORD' (Yahweh) for 'God.' The Ark is here, as in 1 Sam. iv–vi, identified with Yahweh. To this a late copyist took exception, and substituted the present reading.

This incident with its, to us, excessive punishment of an action, whose motive was the perfectly legitimate and laudable one of preventing an accident to the Ark, must be judged from the religious standpoint of this early narrator (M). For him and his contemporaries it was not a question of moral transgression and its punishment (see on 1 Sam. xiv. 43, for the as yet imperfect conception of sin), but rather a question of the sacrosanct character of the Ark, whose 'holiness' was contagious and therefore a source of danger and even of death to ordinary 'unsanctified' persons (see on 1 Sam. vii. 1). Many modern scholars, however, regard this incident of Uzzah's death as a legendary accretion to the historical narrative, which has grown out of the *older* place-name **Perez-uzzah,** 'the breach of Uzzah.'

10. Obed-edom the Gittite: i. e. native of Gath, who must, however, have been a *gēr* (see on i. 13), admitted to certain civil and religious privileges, including admission to the worship of Yahweh. Later ecclesiastical tradition enrolled him among the Levites from motives that are readily apparent (1 Chron. xv. 18, 24). His house must have been in or near Jerusalem.

11 f. By the blessing bestowed upon Obed-edom, the nature of which is not specified, David recognizes that the anger of Yahweh has passed away, and resolves to make another and more cautious attempt to transfer the Ark to his new citadel.

And David went and brought up the ark of God from
the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with joy.
And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the 13
LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a
fatling. And David danced before the LORD with all 14
his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.
So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark 15
of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the
trumpet. And it was so, as the ark of the LORD came 16
into the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul
looked out at the window, and saw king David leaping
and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in
her heart. And they brought in the ark of the LORD, 17
and set it in its place, in the midst of the tent that David
had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and
peace offerings before the LORD. And when David had 18
made an end of offering the burnt offering and the peace
offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD

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13. The Ark on this occasion is reverently carried, not driven (cf. xv. 24, 29). After a few moments of anxious suspense, it is seen that Yahweh is graciously pleased to go with David, who thereupon offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving. The instructive parallel in 1 Chron. xv should be compared, in which the ecclesiastical arrangements of the third century before Christ are transferred to the tenth.

14. David danced before the LORD: *lit.* 'whirled,' as do the modern dervishes in their devotional dances. Note here, and in verse 7 above (restored text), the practical identification of Yahweh with the Ark, as in the narrative 1 Sam. iv-vi.

girded with a linen ephod: see on 1 Sam. ii. 18. The whirling movement of the dance caused the indecent exposure of which we hear in verse 20, and against which the later legislation took precautions (Exod. xxviii. 42, Lev. vi. 10).

16. Michal is deeply offended at what she considers the unkingly behaviour of her husband—note the emphasis on '*king* David.'

18. he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts: rather, 'with the name'; the preposition denotes the means or

19 of hosts. And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, both to men and women, to every one a cake of bread, and a portion *of flesh*, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed
20 every one to his house. Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain
21 fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David said unto Michal, *It was* before the LORD, which chose me above thy father, and above all his house, to appoint me

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instrument, the solemn invocation of the Name being the channel of the Divine blessing. David 'put the Name of Yahweh upon the children of Israel' (Num. vi. 27, where verses 24-26 give the later form of the priestly benediction; see Kautzsch in Hastings' *DB.*, extra vol. 640 f., for the full significance of the 'name of Yahweh' in the earlier literature, and cf. on vii. 13 below). To pronounce the benediction is reckoned as the third of the peculiar prerogatives of the priesthood in Deut. x. 8 (cf. Num. vi. 23, Lev. ix. 22). Here, however, David, in virtue of his prerogative as 'the anointed of Yahweh,' combines priestly with royal functions, not merely wearing the priestly dress, but himself offering sacrifice and blessing the people at the close of the service. So too Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 14, 55, which clearly shows that these functions were not yet limited to a special class. See further on viii. 18.

19. a portion of flesh: to the meaning of the single word in the original we have no clue. The margin gives 'a portion of wine,' an alternative quite in keeping with the festive occasion, and suggesting that we may have to do with a corruption of *shēkār*, perhaps in its original sense of 'date-wine.' The corresponding *shikaru* is repeatedly associated with gifts of food, oil, &c., in the Palestinian correspondence of the Amarna period. See the writer's article 'Wine and Strong Drink,' *EBi.* iv. col. 5310.

21 f. The opening words of David's reply should read (cf. LXX): 'Before Yahweh was I dancing, who chose me,' &c. The last clause belongs to verse 22. The answer, though little calculated to appease the queen's anger, shows both David's native humility and his recognition of the true source of his royal dignity.

prince over the people of the LORD, over Israel: there-
fore will I play before the LORD. And I will be yet 22
more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight:
but of the handmaids which thou hast spoken of, of them
shall I be had in honour. And Michal the daughter of 23
Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

[D] And it came to pass, when the king dwelt in his 7
house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his
enemies round about, that the king said unto Nathan 2
the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but
the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan 3

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23. Michal's childlessness has usually been regarded as a Divine judgement upon her conduct. The narrator, however, seems to regard it as the result of a permanent estrangement, Michal being henceforth treated like the members of the royal harem mentioned in xx. 3.

(*d*) vii. *The Divine guarantee of the permanence of David's dynasty.*

The true significance of this chapter has been obscured by the insertion, either by the compiler or by a later reader, of verse 13 (see note). The point of the prophetic message is, in brief, that *it is not David who shall build a 'house,'* that is, a temple *for Yahweh, but Yahweh who shall build a 'house,'* that is, a dynasty, *for David.* In the text, apart from the intrusive verse 13, there is no mention of the building of Solomon's temple, but rather the contrary. The chapter forms a literary unit by itself. Its general style connects it with the literary products of the Deuteronomic school, and its contents suggest a date in the latter part of the reign of Josiah, or the period immediately succeeding, *circa* 610–600 B.C., while the dynasty of David was still upon the throne (so Wellhausen and others). The fundamental importance of this chapter for the study of the growth of the Messianic hope in Israel is rightly emphasized by all writers on this great subject. The parallel passage, 1 Chron. xvii, should be compared throughout.

1. the LORD had given him rest, &c.: a favourite Deuteronomistic expression, Deut. xii. 10, xxv. 19; 1 Kings v. 4, &c.

2. Nathan the prophet: the standing designation of the seer who figures so prominently in the story of Uriah and in the matter of the succession (1 Kings i. 1 ff.).

dwelleth within curtains: i. e. in a tent, the curtains being

said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for
4 the LORD is with thee. And it came to pass the same
night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan,
5 saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the
LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?
6 for I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I
brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to
this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.
7 In all places wherein I have walked with all the children
of Israel, spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel,
whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying,
8 Why have ye not built me an house of cedar? Now
therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David,
Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the
sheepcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest

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the breadths of goats' hair cloth of which the tent was made. The **house of cedar** refers back to v. 11.

3 f. Nathan at first approves of David's proposal, but in the following night is divinely informed that it is contrary to the good pleasure of Yahweh, who prefers, as heretofore, the shelter of a simple tent. With this reason for David's abstaining from the erection of a temple in Jerusalem, cf. 1 Kings v. 3 with Skinner's note (Century Bible).

6. The author of this chapter can scarcely have known the narrative of 1 Sam. i–iii with its temple at Shiloh.

have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle: the idea is more fully expressed in 1 Chron. xvii. 5: 'I have gone from tent to tent, and from dwelling to dwelling.' Yahweh, as represented by the Ark, was not tied to any one spot, or to any one form of shelter. In xi. 11 we hear of the Ark being housed in a 'booth.' How far removed all this is from the gorgeous tabernacle of the Priests' Code is self-evident.

7. with any of the tribes: a corruption of 'with any of the judges,' see margin of R.V.

8 ff. Nathan's special message contains three elements: (1) a reminder of God's gracious dealings with David in the past (8, 9^a); (2) an assurance of the continuance of the same to David and to Israel in the future (9^b–11^a); (3) the crowning promise of the permanence of David's seed upon the throne of Israel (11^b, 12, 14–16).

be prince over my people, over Israel: and I have been 9
with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off
all thine enemies from before thee; and I will make thee
a great name, like unto the name of the great ones that
are in the earth. And I will appoint a place for my 10
people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell
in their own place, and be moved no more; neither shall
the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as at
the first, and *as* from the day that I commanded judges to 11
be over my people Israel; and I will cause thee to rest
from all thine enemies. Moreover the LORD telleth thee
that the LORD will make thee an house. When thy days 12
be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will
set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy
bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build 13

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10 f. As the punctuation of R.V. shows, 11ᵃ must be taken with 10. Render 'as at the first, even from the day that,' &c. The troublous times of the Judges shall recur no more, and Israel shall abide in peaceful and permanent possession of the land of promise. Evidently this was written before the Exile.

and I will cause thee to rest: this goes with the preceding clause, and should be read: 'I will cause them [my people Israel] to rest from all their enemies.'

the LORD will make thee an house: read, with LXX here and 1 Chron. xvii. 10, 'will build thee an house,' as in verse 27. This, as was indicated above, gives the key-note of the chapter. For the figure see on 1 Sam. ii. 35, where we have the complement to the passage before us. There we had the promise of the permanence of the Zadokite priesthood, here the permanence of the Davidic dynasty is assured, as is stated more explicitly in verse 16.

12 repeats and expounds the promise of 11ᵇ. Note that the pronoun in 'his kingdom' refers back to David's seed or posterity, and so in verses 14 ff. That the Davidic dynasty as a whole, not any individual member of it, is the burden of the prophecy must be kept in mind throughout. Cf. the summary of this passage given by the Deuteronomic compiler of Kings (1 Kings ii. 4).

13. Wellhausen's contention that this verse has been interpolated is approved by almost all recent writers. It requires

an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of
14 his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall
be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him
with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children
15 of men; but my mercy shall not depart from him, as I

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us to limit the 'seed' of verse 12 to Solomon, and by introducing a thought alien to the rest of the chapter robs Nathan's message of its point. David, moreover, in his subsequent thanksgiving, makes no reference to this postponement of his cherished plan. The interpolation, however, must have taken place at an early date, as it was already known to the Deuteronomic editor or editors of Kings (see Skinner (Century Bible) on 1 Kings v. 5, vi. 18 ff., viii. 14 ff., especially p. 145), by whom the whole prophecy is definitely referred to Solomon by the substitution of 'son' for 'seed,' the individual for the dynasty.

an house for my name: this association of Yahweh's 'name' with the temple is characteristic of, and almost peculiar to, Deuteronomy (xii. 5, 11, 21, and elsewhere), and the Deuteronomic school of editors (1 Kings v. 17, 19, &c.), by whom Yahweh is said to 'set his name' or 'cause his name to dwell' in the temple. For this school God's true dwelling-place is heaven, but in the sanctuary is His Name, the special manifestation of the Deity vouchsafed to the worshippers by whom His name was invoked. For this important theological conception, see Davidson, *Theology of the O. T.*, 36 ff., 'The Idea of the Divine Name'; Schultz, *O. T. Theology*, ii. 123 f.; Cheyne's article 'Name,' *EBi.* iii. 3268; Skinner's *Kings* (Century Bible), p. 147; and Kautzsch, as cited on vi. 18 above.

14. I will be his father, and he shall be my son (cf. Ps. lxxxix. 26 f.): the rules of Hebrew grammar require us to apply this verse and the following to the successive members of David's dynasty, although the Chronicler has limited their reference to Solomon (1 Chron. xxii. 10, xxviii. 6). Even Israel as a whole had already been called Yahweh's son (Exod. iv. 22, Hos. xi. 1), and the relation between Yahweh and the Messianic King is expressed in similar terms in Ps. ii. 7.

with the rod of men: 'i. e. with punishments such as all men incur when they sin, and from which the seed of David will not be exempted. Cf. the poetical paraphrase, Ps. lxxxix. 30-51' (Driver).

15. For cogent reasons the text of Chronicles is generally preferred: 'and I will not take my mercy away from him [still the dynasty], as I took it from him that was before thee' (1 Chron. xvii. 13).

took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And 16
thine house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever
before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.
According to all these words, and according to all this 17
vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

Then David the king went in, and sat before the LORD; 18
and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my
house, that thou hast brought me thus far? And this 19
was yet a small thing in thine eyes, O Lord GOD; but
thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great
while to come; and this *too* after the manner of men, O
Lord GOD! And what can David say more unto thee? 20
for thou knowest thy servant, O Lord GOD. For thy 21
word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou
wrought all this greatness, to make thy servant know it.

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16. A concluding summary of the prophet's message. For the idea of permanence conveyed by the term 'sure' see on 1 Sam. ii. 35. The thought of David's everlasting kingdom (cf. 1 Kings ii. 45, Ps. lxxxix. 4, 29, 36) contributed an essential element to the Messianic eschatology.

vii. 18–29. *David's thanksgiving prayer.*

18. David . . . went in and sat before the LORD: namely, in the tent in which the Ark was housed in the city, or rather citadel, of David (vi. 12, 17). The attitude of devotion which he assumed is not mentioned elsewhere in the O. T. It probably consisted of 'raising his head and body and sinking backward upon his heels,' which is one of the prescribed attitudes of Mohammedan worship (Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 467, with illustrations).

19. The last clause is now unintelligible, and was already corrupt by the third century B. C. (Chron. and LXX). It probably continued the thought of the preceding clause: 'and thou wilt let me see the generations of men for evermore' (so Budde basing on Ewald and Wellhausen). David hopes to live in his descendants. For this thought see A. B. Davidson's *Theology*, p. 407.

21. The text is again in disorder, as a comparison with LXX and Chronicles shows. H. P. Smith and Budde read: 'To glorify thy servant hast thou promised, and according to thine own heart hast thou wrought in making thy servant know all this greatness.'

22 Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is
none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee,
23 according to all that we have heard with our ears. And
what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like
Israel, whom God went to redeem unto himself for a
people, and to make him a name, and to do great things
for you, and terrible things for thy land, before thy
people, which thou redeemedst to thee out of Egypt,
24 *from* the nations and their gods? And thou didst
establish to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto
thee for ever; and thou, LORD, becamest their God.
25 And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken
concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, con-
26 firm thou it for ever, and do as thou hast spoken. And
let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of
hosts is God over Israel: and the house of thy servant
27 David shall be established before thee. For thou, O
LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, hast revealed to thy
servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath
thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto
28 thee. And now, O Lord GOD, thou art God, and thy
words are truth, and thou hast promised this good thing

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23. This verse affords an interesting example of an early text intentionally altered for dogmatic reasons (cf. on v. 21). Originally it ran somewhat as follows: 'And what other nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom [referring to 'other nation'] a god has ever gone to redeem for himself as a people to make himself a name, and to do for them great and terrible things, in driving out before his people a nation and its gods?' The theological particularism, which involved, though only as an hypothesis, the existence and working in history of other gods, was offensive to the monotheistic thought of a later age and led to the present confused text. (So Geiger, followed by most recent commentators.) For the ideas expressed see Deut. iv. 7, 34.

24. The familiar covenant relation between Yahweh and Israel—Yahweh the God of Israel, Israel the people of Yahweh.

unto thy servant: now therefore let it please thee to 29
bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for
ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it:
and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be
blessed for ever.

[**R**] And after this it came to pass, that David smote 8
the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took the
bridle of the mother city out of the hand of the Philistines.
And he smote Moab, and measured them with the line, 2
making them to lie down on the ground; and he
measured two lines to put to death, and one full line to
keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to

(*c*) viii. *A summary of David's wars with a list of his principal officers of state.*

The summary character of the contents shows that this chapter was compiled with a view to form the conclusion to David's reign, and, in all probability, to what may be called 'the first edition' of the Book of Samuel (p. 26). It has its counterpart in the briefer summary which forms the provisional close of the reign of Saul, 1 Sam. xiv. 47-51. Both summaries may be assigned to the Deuteronomic compiler or redactor (R). The materials are of course much older; in the case of some of the campaigns, indeed, we have the older record itself preserved in later chapters. Wellhausen and others are of opinion that the lists now found in iii. 2-5 and v. 13-16 originally formed part of this chapter. Here, again, the parallel in 1 Chron. (xviii. 1 ff.) should be compared.

1. the bridle of the mother city: by this the Revisers no doubt mean the power (or possession) of the Philistine metropolis. But this is exceedingly doubtful. The A. V. and R. V. marg. take the words as a proper name, Metheg-ammah. In reality the text is corrupt. The Chronicler read or guessed: 'Gath and her daughters,' i. e. dependent villages (1 Chron. xviii. 1).

2. The reasons for the changed relations with Moab (see 1 Sam. xxii. 3 f.) are unknown, as this campaign is not elsewhere referred to. Two-thirds of the (male?) inhabitants David put to the ban. This mode of conducting warfare, though quite in accord with the spirit of David's age, offended the moral sense of a later day, as we see from the Chronicler's omission of the middle portion of the verse (1 Chron. xviii. 2).

3 David, and brought presents. David smote also
Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went
4 to recover his dominion at the River. And David took
from him a thousand and seven hundred horsemen, and
twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the
chariot horses, but reserved of them for an hundred
5 chariots. And when the Syrians of Damascus came to
succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David smote of the
6 Syrians two and twenty thousand men. Then David
put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David and brought presents. And the
7 LORD gave victory to David whithersoever he went. And
David took the shields of gold that were on the servants
8 of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. And from
Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king

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3 ff. The compiler here gives a longer summary of a campaign against the king of Zobah and his allies, of which the original account, apparently, may still be read in x. 6 ff. (which see).

king of Zobah: a small Aramaean kingdom somewhere in or near the modern district of the *Jaulān* (see on x. 6). The text of the last clause is doubtful (see margin); probably we should read as in Chronicles: 'as he went to stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates.'

4. The uncertainty of the numbers in the received text of O. T. is well illustrated by a comparison of this verse with x. 18, with 1 Chron. xviii. 4, and with the Greek readings in all three passages.

chariot horses . . . chariots: the same word is used in the original in both places; we should therefore render: 'and he reserved of them a hundred chariot horses.'

5. the Syrians of Damascus here take the place of 'the Syrians beyond the Euphrates' of x. 16. In any case it is exceedingly doubtful if David's kingdom included the ancient and powerful city of Damascus.

6. garrisons: or 'officers,' political residents, see on 1 Sam. x. 5, and cf. 1 Kings vii. 7.

8. Betah and . . . Berothai: the accuracy of these names, and therefore their position, is doubtful, see 1 Chron. xviii. 8, and the margin here.

David took exceeding much brass. And when Toi king 9
of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of
Hadadezer, then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, 10
to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought
against Hadadezer and smitten him: for Hadadezer had
wars with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him vessels of
silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass: these also 11
did king David dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver
and gold that he dedicated of all the nations which he
subdued; of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of 12
Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of
the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.
And David gat him a name when he returned from 13
smiting of the Syrians in the Valley of Salt, even eighteen
thousand men. And he put garrisons in Edom; through- 14
out all Edom put he garrisons, and all the Edomites

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9 f. David receives an embassy from Toi, or Tou (see Chron.), king of Hamath on the Orontes. Budde considers that these two verses may originally have stood after x. 19.

Joram: in Chron. more correctly 'Hadoram,' which is probably a corruption of Hadad-ram. The last contains, like Hadad-ezer and Ben-hadad, the name of the Syrian thunder god, who was identified with the Assyrian Rammānu (Rimmon).

13. the Valley of Salt: probably the modern wady of the same name, the *Wadi el-Milḥ*, a continuation of the *Wadi es-Seba* beside Beer-sheba. This is the last place where we should expect to find the **Syrians.** Read therefore, with other slight emendations: 'and when he had returned from smiting the Syrians, he smote Edom (Chron., LXX) in the Valley of Salt.' Aram (Syria) and Edom closely resemble each other in the Hebrew character[1], and are frequently confused. See also R. V. marg. and verse 14. The Valley of Salt was also the scene of a later victory over the Edomites (2 Kings xiv. 7). The particular victory of our text is ascribed to Joab in the heading of Ps. lx, and to Abishai in 1 Chron. xviii. 12, but the latter is manifestly a mistaken reading of the word rendered 'had returned' in the emended text as given above.

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[1] ארם, אדם.

became servants to David. And the LORD gave victory
to David whithersoever he went.
15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed
16 judgement and justice unto all his people. And Joab the
son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the
17 son of Ahilud was recorder: and Zadok the son of Ahitub,
and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were priests; and
18 Seraiah was scribe; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada

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viii. 15-18. *David's principal officers of state.*

The greater part of this paragraph, verses 16-18, is repeated with some deviations in xx. 23-26. In the latter passage the order is more logical, first the chiefs of the army, then the heads of the civil administration, and finally the chief priests. To the first category belong **Joab,** the commander-in-chief of David's military forces, consisting for the most part of militia, and **Benaiah,** who was over **the Cherethites and the Pelethites** (see the marginal note): these were a company of foreign mercenaries forming the royal bodyguard. The former, in Hebrew *Krēthi*, had their home in the Negeb (1 Sam. xxx. 14), and were akin to the Philistines. Their name has usually been understood as implying that their original home was the island of Crete. The latter, in Hebrew *Plēthi*, are assumed to have been Philistines, the name *Pelishti* having become *Plēthi* through assimilation to *Krēthi*, from which *Plēthi* is never found dissociated (xv. 18, xx. 7, 23, &c.).

The heads of the civil administration were **Jehoshaphat**, the **recorder** (Heb. *mazkir*), and **Seraiah,** the **scribe.** The *mazkir* is generally supposed to have been the official annalist or chronicler (so R. V. marg.), but etymologically the term signifies 'one who reminds' another (cf. Isa. xliii. 26, lxii. 6, 'the LORD's remembrancers,' R. V.). In this sense the English official designation, 'the king's remembrancer,' is the exact equivalent. The duty of the remembrancer was probably to keep the king informed of the business of the state, and to advise him thereon, like the grand vizir of an oriental court. To the **scribe** or secretary (R. V. marg.) was doubtless committed the drafting and custody of official documents, perhaps also the task of recording the outstanding events of the reign. Curiously the name of David's scribe, here Seraiah, appears at every mention in a different disguise. In 1 Kings iv. 3 his name is given as Shisha. Cf. below xx. 25, and the parallels in Chronicles and LXX.

was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were priests.

[C] And David said, Is there yet any that is left of 9

In the third category we find David's priests, chief of whom were **Zadok** and **Abiathar** (see xx. 25). To these was committed in particular the custody of the Ark of God (see on xv. 24 f.). By a dislocation of the text, two errors have crept in, so that Zadok is now falsely represented as a descendant of Eli, and Abiathar is displaced by his father, who fell a victim to his loyalty to David (1 Sam. xx. 16 ff.). Read accordingly: 'and Abiathar the son of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, and Zadok were priests.' The latter, here mentioned for the first time, became sole priest on Abiathar's deposition by Solomon on his accession (1 Kings ii. 27), and thus the progenitor of the Jerusalem priesthood of later days. The most notable item remains.

and David's sons were priests: this statement must be taken literally, not as the Chronicler, writing at a time when the priesthood had become the exclusive right of the descendants of Aaron, interpreted the words, 'chief about the king' (1 Chron. xviii. 17), nor yet as 'chief ministers,' as the Revisers strangely suggest in their margin. See the notes on vi. 17 f. and on xx. 26.

Third Division. 2 SAMUEL IX—XX.

AT THE COURT OF DAVID.

These twelve chapters of the Book of Samuel form the longest continuous section of historical narrative from a single source to be found in the Old Testament. With their continuation in 1 Kings i–ii, they have been extracted from an early document which is universally regarded, on many grounds, as one of the finest extant examples of Hebrew prose literature (p. 24). As distinguished from the immediately preceding chapters, which deal with matters of public interest, the capture of Jerusalem, the wars with Israel's neighbours and the like, chapters ix–xx are concerned primarily with the court and family life of David in Jerusalem. Hence we propose to indicate this source by the symbol C, and the nature of its contents by the heading—'At the Court of David.' The identity of this document with the other early source, M, which has supplied the great mass of the narrative since 1 Sam. ix, must be left an open question.

One receives the impression from 'the abundance and particularity of detail,' and from the freshness and vividness of the narrative, that the author of C stands nearer to the incidents recorded than is the case with M. But this impression may be

the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for
2 Jonathan's sake? And there was of the house of Saul
a servant whose name was Ziba, and they called him
unto David; and the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba?
3 And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is
there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew
the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the
king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.
4 And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba
said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir
5 the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. Then king David sent,
and fetched him out of the house of Machir the son of
6 Ammiel, from Lo-debar. And Mephibosheth, the son
of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came unto David, and

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delusive (see further, Introduction, p. 21, note where also mention is made of two interesting suggestions as to the ultimate source of C). The contents of the division may be arranged in five subdivisions as given in section ii of the Introduction.

A. 2 Sam. ix. *David's Kindness to Meri-baal.*

The abrupt manner in which the chapter opens shows it to be the continuation of something that went before. Klostermann and more recent writers have accordingly suggested that our chapter was originally preceded by ch. xxi, with its account of the tragedy which befell the seven descendants of Saul. There are difficulties in the way of accepting this suggestion, but it must be admitted that the peculiar form of David's inquiry (verses 1, 3) requires some preceding explanation of the disappearance from public view of 'the house of Saul.' The insinuations conveyed in a later part of this document (see xvi. 7 f. xix. 28) also point in the same direction.

3. the kindness of God: cf. the terms of David's oath to Jonathan, 1 Sam. xx. 14 f. The cause of Meri-baal's lameness was explained above, iv. 4, where see for the name Mephibosheth = Meri-baal or Merib-baal.

4. Machir the son of Ammiel: a prominent member of the Manassite clan of the same name (Num. xxvi. 29 ff.) settled east of the Jordan. His friendly relations with David appear later, see xvii. 27, a passage which shows that **Lo-debar** was not far from Mahanaim, the former residence of Meri-baal's uncle, Ish-baal.

fell on his face, and did obeisance. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely 7 shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he did 8 obeisance, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? Then 9 the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, All that pertained to Saul and to all his house have I given unto thy master's son. And thou shalt till the 10 land for him, thou, and thy sons, and thy servants; and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have bread to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then said Ziba unto the king, 11 According to all that my lord the king commandeth his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's

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7. Fear not: Meri-baal's fear was by no means groundless in view of the 'thorough' policy then, and still in the East, adopted by the founder of a new dynasty towards possible rivals from the old. The tragedy of Gibeah (ch. xxi) was also fresh in his mind. In addition to the restitution of the family property, Meri-baal receives a place at the royal table. In this decision motives of policy perhaps had a place, as well as loyalty to the memory of Jonathan.

10. Although 'eating continually at the king's table' (verse 13), Meri-baal would naturally have a house and establishment of his own to maintain in the capital. The means for their maintenance was supplied by the restored estates of Saul, of which Ziba was appointed resident administrator.

11. By the insertion of the words in italics, the second half of this verse is put, against the grammar, into David's mouth, thereby repeating 10^{b}. The Greek form of the text is preferable: 'So Meri-baal ate at David's table as one of the king's sons.' Cf. R. V. marg.

12 sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name
was Mica. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were
13 servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt
in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's
table; and he was lame on both his feet.

10 And it came to pass after this, that the king of the
children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in
2 his stead. And David said, I will shew kindness unto
Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness
unto me. So David sent by the hand of his servants to
comfort him concerning his father. And David's serv-
3 ants came into the land of the children of Ammon. But

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12. Since the reception of Meri-baal must be placed comparatively early in David's reign at Jerusalem, the mention of Mica must be given by anticipation, if Meri-baal was only five years old at his father's death (iv. 4). Through Mica the house of Saul was continued for several centuries according to 1 Chron. viii. 35 ff.

B. 2 Sam. x–xii. *David's War with the Ammonites, including the Affair of Bath-sheba.*

The narrator's main interest centres in the episode of David's criminal relations with Bath-sheba, which issued ultimately in the birth of Solomon, with whose accession to the throne this document C concludes (see above). This episode is given its proper historical setting by the account of the campaigns against the Ammonites and their Syrian allies. The Chronicler, it may be noted, omits from his life of David this dark stain on his hero's character, retaining only 2 Sam. x, xi. 1 and xii. 26, 30 f. See 1 Chron. xix. 1—xx. 3. The narrative falls into the following sections, the contents of which are indicated below: (*a*) x. 1—xi. 1, (*b*) xi. 2–27, (*c*) xii. 1–25, (*d*) xii. 26–31.

(*a*) x. 1—xi. 1. *David makes war on Ammon to avenge an insult to his ambassadors.*

1 f. the king of the children of Ammon: this was the Nahash (verse 2) who gave Saul the opportunity of winning his spurs by the relief of Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam. xi. 1 ff.). The occasion on which Nahash 'shewed kindness' to David is not recorded. His sympathies were doubtless with the latter in the 'long war between the house of Saul and the house of David' (iii. 1).

the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David sent his servants unto thee to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it? So Hanun took David's 4
servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away. When they told it unto 5
David, he sent to meet them; for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return. And when the 6
children of Ammon saw that they were become odious to David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, twenty

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3. to search the city: this, we may assume, was Rabbah of Ammon, the capital of the kingdom, see on xi. 1.

4 f. Note the threefold indignity involved (1) in laying hands on the inviolate persons of ambassadors; (2) in shaving any part of the beard, the oriental symbol of manhood; and (3) in making the victims the objects of further ridicule by their having only one half of the beard removed. In addition to all this, these dignified and sacrosanct ambassadors had to submit to an indecent exposure. No wonder that 'the men were greatly ashamed.'

6-14 relate the first campaign against the Ammonites, who, in anticipation of David's action, engage a number of the neighbouring petty states of Syria to come to their assistance—for a consideration of a thousand talents of silver, according to 1 Chron. xix. 6.

6. the Syrians of Beth-rehob: a city at the foot of Hermon, near Dan (Num. xiii. 21, Judges xviii. 28). The other principalities here named, **Zobah, Maacah, Tob,** to which Geshur (xv. 8) may be added as a fifth, seem all to have lain between Mount Hermon and the Jabbok, the northern boundary of Gilead. This region is now known as the *Jaulān*. See the Bible dictionaries for more precise details. Winckler would identify Maacah with Geshur, thus reducing the principalities to four (*KAT.*^{3} 291). Absalom's mother, it will be remembered, the daughter of the king of Geshur, was named Maacah (iii. 3). The smallness of the Maacah contingent compared with those of its neighbours has roused suspicion, but is likely to be nearer the actual numbers sent by these petty states than the traditional figures.

thousand footmen, and the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and the men of Tob twelve thousand men.
7 And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the
8 host of the mighty men. And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array, at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zobah, and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah, were by themselves
9 in the field. Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the
10 Syrians: and the rest of the people he committed into the hand of Abishai his brother, and he put them in
11 array against the children of Ammon. And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for
12 thee, then I will come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for

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7. and all the host of the mighty men: *lit.* 'and all the host, (even) the mighty men'; but elsewhere 'the mighty men' (*gibbôrîm*) figure as a corps of veterans, probably the survivors and successors of the six hundred that accompanied David in his outlaw period. We should therefore read here: 'all the host and the mighty men,' i. e. the militia specially levied for the occasion and this nucleus of a standing army. Cf. xx. 7 where the corps of the *gibbôrîm* is distinguished both from the royal bodyguard, the 'Krethi and Plethi' (see on viii. 18), and from the main body of the militia under Amasa.

8–12 give a lucid account of Joab's tactics. The Ammonite troops are drawn up a short distance from the principal gate of Rabbah, their capital, on which they can fall back in case of defeat. The Syrian contingents take up their position so as to place the Hebrew army between two fires, so to say. The Syrians are regarded by Joab as the more formidable opponents, and accordingly he decides to engage them in person with a body of picked men, leaving his brother Abishai with the rest of the militia to deal with the Ammonites. Should either division of the Hebrew army show signs of distress, the other is to advance to its assistance.

12. and for the cities of our God: a unique and difficult ex-the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good. So Joab and the people that were 13 with him drew nigh unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him. And when the children of 14 Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, they likewise fled before Abishai, and entered into the city. Then Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem. [R] And when the Syrians saw that they 15 were put to the worse before Israel, they gathered themselves together. And Hadarezer sent, and brought out 16 the Syrians that were beyond the River: and they came to Helam, with Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer at their head. And it was told David; and 17 he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan,

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pression; read, with Klostermann and Budde, 'let us play the men for our people and for the Ark of God.' Since the Ark accompanied the army in the second Ammonite campaign in the following year (xi. 11), there is every reason to assume its presence on this occasion. Joab's devout expression of resignation is identical with that used by Eli (1 Sam. iii. 18).

14. On the flight of the Syrians, the Ammonites retire behind the shelter of their city walls. As it was now probably too late in the year for a formal siege, Joab returns to Jerusalem.

x. 15-19. *David reduces several Syrian principalities.*

We have here a doublet of viii. 3-8, the source of which is not clear. If it originally belonged to C, at least its position here is due to the compiler, as it cannot well be fitted into the latter's narrative, for in xi. 1 we find Joab resuming warlike operations against Ammon as soon as the season allowed. Here, moreover, David appears in command to the exclusion of Joab, while the position of Hadadezer is at variance with that implied in verse 6 (see on 19 below), all pointing to a source distinct from C.

15. The logic of this verse leaves something to be desired. The first half, to 'Israel,' may be part of C's narrative, the continuation of which is now found at the end of verse 19. The connexion of thought is then perfect.

16. Hadarezer: in the best Hebrew MSS. Hadadezer, as viii. 3. The 'River' here—as always when so printed in R.V.—is the Euphrates, and implies that Hadadezer's authority extended into Mesopotamia. The position of **Helam** is unknown.

and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in
18 array against David, and fought with him. And the
Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians
the men of seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand
horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host,
19 that he died there. And when all the kings that were
servants to Hadarezer saw that they were put to the
worse before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and
served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children
of Ammon any more.

11 [C] And it came to pass, at the return of the year, at the time when kings go out *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem.

2 And it came to pass at eventide, that David arose

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18. The divergent details of David's victory which are found here, in viii. 4, and in 1 Chron. xix. 18, are the despair alike of the textual and of the historical critic.

19. This representation of Hadadezer as the head of a number of subject kings conflicts both with viii. 3, where he is merely king of Zobah, and with x. 6, where Zobah is one of four co-ordinate states. The inference has been already drawn. There is no reason, however, for questioning the fact that David succeeded in establishing a suzerainty over these principalities of the Jaulan. The date may have been after the close of the Ammonite war.

xi. **1. at the return of the year:** in the following spring, after the rains had ceased about the beginning of May. This was the usual time, as the narrator informs us, for resuming warlike operations (cf. 1 Kings xx. 22, 26). The second campaign opened with the siege of **Rabbah,** the Ammonite capital, which stood some twenty miles, as the crow flies, east of the Jordan at the head of the *Wadi Ammān*. Under the name of Philadelphia it had an honourable history from the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus to the third century A.D. Its modern name is *Ammān*.

(*b*) xi. 2-27. *David and Bath-sheba.*

2. David's new palace on the eastern ridge (vi. 11) would over-

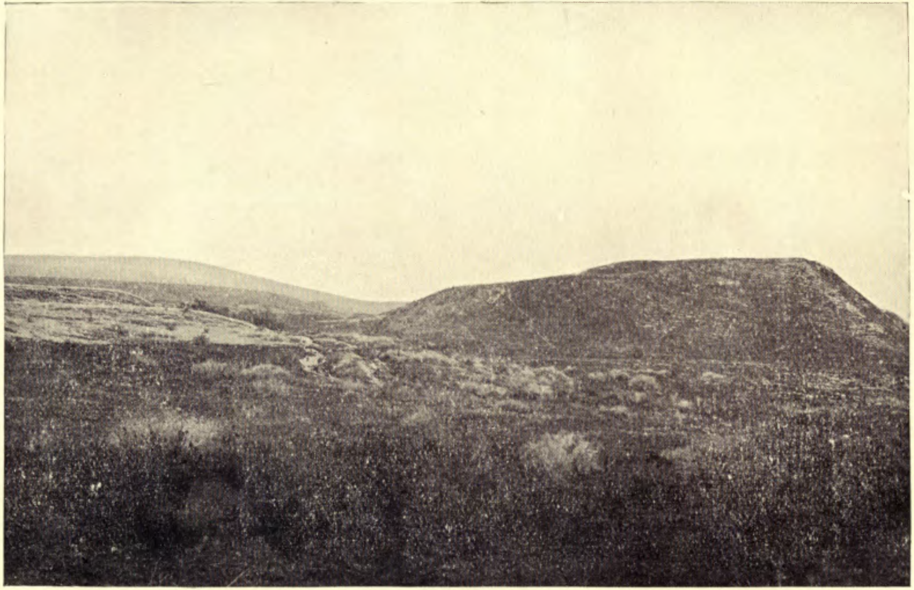

Photo: Pal. Expl. Fund

BETHSHAN: THE CITADEL

from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's
house: and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and
the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David 3
sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is
not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of
Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took 4
her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her;
(for she was purified from her uncleanness;) and she
returned unto her house. And the woman conceived; 5
and she sent and told David, and said, I am with child.
And David sent to Joab, *saying*, Send me Uriah the 6
Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. And when 7
Uriah was come unto him, David asked of him how
Joab did, and how the people fared, and how the war
prospered. And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy 8
house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of

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look the houses on at least three sides. The time was late afternoon, when David had finished his siesta (cf. iv. 5). The motive of the bath is suggested by the parenthesis in verse 4 (see Lev. xv. 19 ff.).

3. Bath-sheba: in 1 Chron. iii. 5 'Bath-shua' by a mistaken pointing for 'Bath-sheva,' a variant pronunciation merely. Her husband **Uriah** and her father **Eliam** are both enrolled in David's second order of knighthood (xxiii. 34, 39). The latter was the son of the famous Ahithophel (cf. on xv. 12).

Uriah the Hittite. The name Uriah, probably 'Yahweh is light' or 'fire,' shows either that his father had been a Yahweh-worshipper before him, or that Uriah had taken this name when admitted as a *gēr* to the cultus of his patron. We learn further from this passage that in those early days non-Hebrew *gērîm* or outlanders enjoyed the *connubium*—the right of intermarriage—in contrast to the rigid exclusiveness of a later period.

6 ff. To conceal his crime David devises a scheme which is frustrated by the husband's religious scruples as a 'consecrated' soldier. For the sexual taboo enforced in war-time, see on 1 Sam. xxi. 5 (p. 148).

7. did, . . . fared, . . . prospered: variant renderings of the idiomatic Hebrew phrase 'to ask after the welfare (*lit.* peace)' of some one.

the king's house, and there followed him a mess *of meat*
9 from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's
house with all the servants of his lord, and went not
10 down to his house. And when they had told David,
saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said
unto Uriah, Art thou not come from a journey? where-
11 fore didst thou not go down unto thine house? And
Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah,
abide in booths; and my lord Joab, and the servants of
my lord, are encamped in the open field; shall I then
go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my
wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do
12 this thing. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to-day
also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah
13 abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. And
when David had called him, he did eat and drink before
him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out
to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went
14 not down to his house. And it came to pass in the
morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it
15 by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter,
saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle,

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8. a mess of meat **from the king:** *lit.* 'a portion' or 'gift from the king.' Such a gift was a special mark of favour from a superior (see Gen. xliii. 34).

11. The presence of the Ark, as the visible representative of the deity, with the army on active service, which this passage attests, is a significant fact in early Hebrew religion. See the Appendix, and cf. on x. 12, xv. 24.

as thou livest: read, to obviate the tautology, 'as Yahweh liveth' (Wellhausen). See on 1 Sam. xx. 3.

13 ff. The narrator continues unsparingly to unfold a second and still more discreditable attempt to break down Uriah's self-restraint. Finally, in despair of overcoming the soldier's scruples, David resolves upon his death. Verse 13 should begin thus: 'And on the morrow when David,' &c., as in the margin.

and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.
And it came to pass, when Joab kept watch upon the 16
city, that he assigned Uriah unto the place where he
knew that valiant men were. And the men of the city 17
went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of
the people, even of the servants of David; and Uriah
the Hittite died also. Then Joab sent and told David 18
all the things concerning the war; and he charged the 19
messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of
telling all the things concerning the war unto the king,
it shall be that, if the king's wrath arise, and he say unto 20
thee, Wherefore went ye so nigh unto the city to fight?
knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? who 21
smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not
a woman cast an upper millstone upon him from the
wall, that he died at Thebez? why went ye so nigh the
wall? then shalt thou say, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite
is dead also. So the messenger went, and came and 22
shewed David all that Joab had sent him for. And the 23

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xi. 16-25. *Joab carries out his master's order and Uriah falls in battle.*

18 ff. Joab sends a messenger to report verbally to David on the sortie and the loss of life it had entailed. Anticipating that the latter would censure his rashness, Joab instructs the reporter to inform David that Uriah was among the slain. The narrator evidently wishes us to understand that Joab had grasped the situation, and confidently counted upon the effect of the last item of news upon the king.

21. Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth: a disguised form of Jerub-baal (see on ii. 18). The incident is told in Judges ix. 50 ff. **Thebez** is generally identified with the modern *Tubas*, about halfway between Shechem and Beth-shan.

22. At the end of this verse the Hebrew text has dropped a few lines preserved in the Greek version, which proceeds thus: 'even all the things concerning the war' (as in verse 18). 'And David was angry with Joab, and he said to the messenger, Wherefore went ye so nigh unto the city to fight?'—and so on, repeating

messenger said unto David, The men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were
24 upon them even unto the entering of the gate. And the shooters shot at thy servants from off the wall; and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah
25 the Hittite is dead also. Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city,
26 and overthrow it: and encourage thou him. And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was
27 dead, she made lamentation for her husband. And when the mourning was past, David sent and took her home to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

12 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he

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with slight variations the words of verses 20 f., to 'why went ye so nigh the wall?' To these questions the messenger replies in verse 23.

25. The result is precisely as Joab anticipated. Instead of being censured, he is encouraged to persevere with the siege.

26 f. After a short period of mourning, Bath-sheba is taken into the royal harem. The last clause of verse 27 is the introduction to the third act of this domestic tragedy (xii. 15^b–23).

(*c*) xii. 1–25. *David rebuked by Nathan: the death of Bath-sheba's child and the birth of Solomon.*

The objective character of the rest of this history of David's family life, and the fact that in the further development of the tragedy no reference is made to Nathan's interposition, while verse 15^b, as has just been pointed out, forms an excellent sequence to xi. 27, have led several recent scholars to regard Nathan's appearance and rebuke as an addition by the compiler from another source. It is true that the oldest Hebrew writers—and C is the earliest we have (see the Introduction pp. 8, 21)—were content as a rule to allow their story to point its own moral. In the present instance, for example, the author of C may have been content with allowing his readers to see that the death of the child was sufficient evidence of David's sin and the Divine displeasure.

came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men
in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich 2
man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor 3
man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had
bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with
him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel,
and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was
unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller 4
unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock
and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that
was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and
dressed it for the man that was come to him. And 5
David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and
he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath
done this is worthy to die: and he shall restore the lamb 6
fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had
no pity.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus 7
saith the LORD, the God of Israel, I anointed thee king
over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;
and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's 8

On the other hand, it may be sufficient with Wellhausen, Kittel, and others to regard verses 10–12 as having been inserted by the compiler into the older narrative for the purpose of 'underscoring the moral of the history,' and heightening the colour of the prophetic rebuke, and to leave the rest of the chapter to C.

1. Nathan approaches David ostensibly to ask his decision in a case of high-handed oppression of a poor man by a wealthy neighbour. In reality he tells the parable of the ewe lamb, one of the few examples in the O. T. of this species of composition.

6. fourfold: read, with LXX, 'sevenfold.' The proverbial expression of the Greek text is more likely to be the original. A later copyist corrected this to 'fourfold' in order to harmonize with the law of Exod. xxii. 1.

7 ff. David is convicted out of his own mouth, and is, moreover, accused of base ingratitude to the Author of all his good fortune.

8. thy master's wives. The reference is to the ancient custom

wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel
and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would
9 have added unto thee such and such things. Wherefore
hast thou despised the word of the LORD, to do that
which is evil in his sight? thou hast smitten Uriah the
Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy
wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children
10 of Ammon. [**R**] Now therefore, the sword shall never
depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me,
and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.
11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against
thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives
before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour,
and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.
12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before
13 all Israel, and before the sun. [**C**] And David said unto
Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan
said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin;
14 thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou

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by which a sovereign's harem passed with the crown to his successor. For an illustration see xvi. 21 f., and cf. 1 Kings ii. 17 ff. with Skinner's notes (Century Bible).

10-12. The nature of these three verses has been pointed out in the introductory note above. It can scarcely be doubted that they are a *vaticinium post eventum* inserted by the compiler or another into the original text of 1-15. According to the latter David's crime is to find its punishment solely in the death of his child (verse 14). The opening words (verse 10) are a reflection of the family feuds which brought about the deaths of Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah, while verse 11 clearly alludes to the unfilial conduct of the latter as related below (xvi. 21 f.).

13 continues verse 9, and gives David's confession of his sin which calls forth the assurance that Yahweh had caused his sin to pass away (so literally). 'The sin rested upon David and would (if not taken away) work death for him. Yahweh took it away, that he should not die, but it wrought the death of the child' (H. P. Smith).

14. Read: 'Howbeit, because thou hast despised Yahweh in

hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to
blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall
surely die. And Nathan departed unto his house. 15
And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare
unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore be- 16
sought God for the child; and David fasted, and went
in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of 17
his house arose, *and stood* beside him, to raise him up
from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat
bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh 18
day, that the child died. And the servants of David
feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said,
Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him,
and he hearkened not unto our voice: how will he then
vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? But 19
when David saw that his servants whispered together,
David perceived that the child was dead: and David said
unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He
is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, 20
and anointed himself, and changed his apparel; and he
came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then

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this thing.' The verb rendered 'give occasion to blaspheme' nowhere bears this meaning, but always denotes 'to scorn, despise,' with Yahweh, the name of Yahweh, &c., as object. A copyist who took offence at the strong language of the original inserted 'enemies of,' as in a similar case, 1 Sam. xxv. 22.

xii. 15^{b}–23. *The death of Bath-sheba's child.*

16. The tenses of the original are frequentative, showing that David renewed his intercession every day of the seven (verse 18). The place to which David **went in** is not specified. The context suggests an inner room in the palace rather than, as in vii. 18, the sacred tent (see on verse 20).

17. the elders of his house: the senior officers of his household.

18. The R.V. marginal rendering of the latter half of the verse is closer to the Hebrew idiom.

20. came into the house of the LORD: the tent which he had pitched for the Ark in the citadel (vi. 17; cf. 1 Kings i. 39, ii. 28).

he came to his own house; and when he required they
21 set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his
servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast
done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it
was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise
22 and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet
alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who knoweth
whether the LORD will not be gracious to me, that the
23 child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I
fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him,
24 but he shall not return to me. And David comforted
Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with
her: and she bare a son, and he called his name
25 Solomon. And the LORD loved him; and he sent by
the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name
Jedidiah, for the LORD's sake.

26 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of

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23. David consoles himself with the thought that the child lives—though it was but a shadowy existence—in Sheol, 'the house of meeting for all living' (Job xxx. 23 R.V. marg.). There by and by he will rejoin his child, as Jacob hoped to go to Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 35). This thought of a continued existence of a sort in Sheol is reflected in the frequent O. T. phrase, 'he was gathered to his fathers.' On the early Hebrew conceptions of the after-world, see A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the O. T.*, 425 ff.; Charles, *Eschatology*, 33 ff.; Driver, *Sermons on the O. T.*, 72 ff.

24 f. *Birth of Solomon.* The easiest construction of the somewhat difficult text is to take the last clause of verse 24 with the following verse: 'And Yahweh loved him, and sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and called his name Yedidyah (the beloved of Yahweh).'

The following words, **for the LORD'S sake**, have been added by a reader who misunderstood the construction of the sentence. It should be added, however, that some scholars would read: 'and he (David) committed him to the charge (*lit.* hand) of Nathan.' That Nathan acted as Solomon's tutor would be an interesting biographical detail could it be substantiated.

(*d*) xii. 26–31. *The capture of Rabbah.*

Our author now resumes the thread of the narrative which was

Ammon, and took the royal city. And Joab sent mes- 27
sengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah,
yea, I have taken the city of waters. Now therefore gather 28
the rest of the people together, and encamp against the
city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called
after my name. And David gathered all the people 29
together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and
took it. And he took the crown of their king from off 30
his head; and the weight thereof was a talent of gold,
and *in it were* precious stones; and it was set on David's
head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city, ex-
ceeding much. And he brought forth the people that 31

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dropped after xi. 1, although he has already advanced considerably beyond the date of this section, since the capture of Rabbah was evidently the result of Joab's second summer campaign.

26 f. and took the royal city. This reading, which stultifies Joab's message, is clearly a copyist's slip for **the city of waters.** Here, as in v. 7, 9, the word rendered 'city' has its original meaning of 'fortress'; hence we should render 'the Water Fort,' the work defending the water supply. An interesting parallel is furnished by Polybius (v. 71) in his account of the siege of Rabbath-Ammon by Antiochus Epiphanes. The latter succeeded in stopping the water supply, when the garrison surrendered (218 B.C.). The city proper was built on the high ground above.

28. and it be called after my name: literally and more expressively, 'and my name be called over it' (cf. R. V. marg.), in token of possession. So David renamed the Jebusite citadel 'David's burg' (v. 7, 9). Joab's self-abnegation in this case should not be forgotten in our estimate of the character of this truculent but loyal subject.

30. he took the crown of their king, &c. If the weight of the crown in question is correctly given as a talent—54 lb. avoirdupois at the lowest computation (see Hastings' *DB.* iii. 419, iv. 903)—it is impossible that it could have been worn either by Hanun or by David. But the same consonants as yield 'their king' may be read 'Milcom,' the national deity of the Ammonites (note margin); and this, the reading of most Greek MSS., is undoubtedly original. In the sequel we should read: 'and in it (the crown of Milcom) was a precious stone, which was set upon David's head.'

31. The old controversy as to whether the Ammonites were

were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

13 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and
2 Amnon the son of David loved her. And Amnon was so vexed that he fell sick because of his sister Tamar;

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savagely done to death by means of certain instruments of torture here enumerated, or whether they were merely set to various forms of hard labour, is reflected in the alternative renderings of the text and margin of R. V. The text advocates torture, the margin hard labour. The latter is supported by the grammar and the lexicon, and is the view now generally adopted. Render somewhat as follows: 'and he set them to saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them labour at the brick-moulds.' For a full discussion of the difficulties see Driver's *Notes* in loc.

C. 2 Sam. xiii–xiv. *Amnon and Absalom.*

From this point to the end of ch. xx, this history of David's court is continued in precise chronological sequence. The incidents and episodes are almost all mutually related as cause and effect. Thus, to take only the most outstanding, Amnon's lust leads to Absalom's revenge, the sequel of which is banishment to a heathen land. As he broods in exile over his fancied wrongs, the prince's character deteriorates, and this deterioration in due course issues in his ambitious attempt to seize the throne and all that flowed therefrom. The progress of the narrative is marked by three stages, (*a*) xiii. 1–22, (*b*) xiii. 23–39, (*c*) xiv.

(*a*) xiii. 1–22. *Amnon deforces Tamar, the sister of Absalom.*

1. Absalom the son of David. The narrator introduces us at once to the young prince who is the central figure in the tragic events to be disclosed in the following chapters. Absalom and Tamar were full brother and sister, children of Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur (iii. 3). Amnon was David's first-born, the son of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess (iii. 2), and therefore Tamar's half-brother. The case of Abraham and Sarah shows that marriage between the children of the same father by different mothers was sanctioned by early Hebrew custom (cf. verse 13, end), though forbidden by the later legislation (Lev. xviii. 9).

2. An excellent illustration both of the strong emotions and of

for she was a virgin; and it seemed hard to Amnon to
do any thing unto her. But Amnon had a friend, whose 3
name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother:
and Jonadab was a very subtil man. And he said unto 4
him, Why, O son of the king, art thou thus lean from
day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said
unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.
And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, 5
and feign thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to
see thee, say unto him, Let my sister Tamar come, I
pray thee, and give me bread to eat, and dress the food
in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand.
So Amnon lay down, and feigned himself sick: and when 6
the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the
king, Let my sister Tamar come, I pray thee, and make
me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her
hand. Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go 7
now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him food.
So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he 8
was laid down. And she took dough, and kneaded it,
and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes.
And she took the pan, and poured them out before him; 9
but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all
men from me. And they went out every man from him.

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the social customs of the East. Amnon was literally 'sick of love' (Cant. ii. 5, v. 8, and the Arabian Nights *passim*), and had few opportunities of seeing the unmarried members of the royal harem, and probably none of seeing Tamar alone.

3 introduces Amnon's **subtil** cousin and Mephistopheles.

7. David sent home to Tamar: rather, 'sent (a message) to the palace to Tamar.' Amnon, as the king's eldest son, evidently had a separate establishment.

9 f. The sequence of the action in these two verses is difficult to follow. We should probably read with Klostermann, by a slight change: 'And she called the attendant (cf. verse 17), and he poured them out before him.' The untasted cakes, we

10 And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the food into the
chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar
took the cakes which she had made, and brought them
11 into the chamber to Amnon her brother. And when she
had brought them near unto him to eat, he took hold of
her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister.
12 And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force
me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do
13 not thou this folly. And I, whither shall I carry my
shame? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools
in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the
14 king; for he will not withhold me from thee. Howbeit
he would not hearken unto her voice: but being stronger
15 than she, he forced her, and lay with her. Then Amnon
hated her with exceeding great hatred; for the hatred
wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith
he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her,
16 Arise, be gone. And she said unto him, Not so, because
this great wrong in putting me forth is *worse* than the
other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken

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must suppose, the attendant brought back to Tamar, who had till then modestly refrained from entering the bed-chamber.

12 f. Tamar's touching appeal to her brother's conscience, setting clearly before him the sinfulness of his desire and the consequences both to herself and to him, while frankly assuring him of her willingness to enter into lawful wedlock with him.

do not thou this folly: a standing expression in the O. T. for acts of immorality, hence rather 'this villany,' as the word is rendered in Isa. xxxii. 6; 'profligates' and 'profligacy' are nearer the mark than the weaker terms 'fools' (verse 13) and 'folly.' Morality, it will be observed, finds its sanction in custom, not in a written code (cf. Kautzsch in Hastings' *DB.*, extra vol., 624^{a}).

15. Amnon's heartless treatment of the victim of his lust betrays the hardened profligate.

16. Read: 'Not so, my brother, for greater is this wrong (to send me away) than the other that thou didst unto me,' for which see Driver, *Notes* in loc.

unto her. Then he called his servant that ministered 17
unto him, and said, Put now this woman out from me,
and bolt the door after her. And she had a garment of 18
divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the
king's daughters that were virgins apparelled. Then his
servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.
And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment 19
of divers colours that was on her; and she laid her hand
on her head, and went her way, crying aloud as she went.
And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon 20
thy brother been with thee? but now hold thy peace,
my sister: he is thy brother; take not this thing to heart.
So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's
house. But when king David heard of all these things, 21
he was very wroth. And Absalom spake unto Amnon 22
neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom 23

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18 f. The greater part of verse 18 was originally a marginal gloss upon **her garment of divers colours** in verse 19. This rendering represents the Alexandrian tradition regarding this garment, which is mentioned only here and Gen. xxxvii. 3 ff. Modern authorities give 'a tunic of palms and soles' (*lit.* 'of extremities'), i. e. a tunic reaching to and covering hands and feet. It was evidently a mark of distinction compared with the ordinary short tunic which had no sleeves.

19. she laid her hand on her head: an attitude of grief frequently represented on the Egyptian monuments.

21. Add, with LXX, 'yet did he not pain the spirit of Amnon his son, for he loved him because he was his first-born.' David, alas! took no measures against his profligate son. The same expression is used by our author of David's remissness in the upbringing of Adonijah (1 Kings i. 6). This weakness on David's part is perhaps the most conspicuous defect in his character. To it, as the historian clearly perceived, the greatest sorrows of his life were due.

(*b*) xiii. 23-29. *Absalom's revenge and flight.*

After the lapse of two years Absalom embraces the occasion of

had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim:
24 and Absalom invited all the king's sons. And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I pray thee, and his servants
25 go with thy servant. And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not
26 go, but blessed him. Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king
27 said unto him, Why should he go with thee? But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the
28 king's sons go with him. And Absalom commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine; and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded
29 you? be courageous, and be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had com-

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the annual sheep-shearing to invite all the king's sons to the accompanying festivities (see on 1 Sam. xxv. 2 ff.). When the merry-making is at its height, Amnon is murdered by Absalom's order, whereupon the latter flees to the court of his grandfather, the king of Geshur.

23. Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim. Both places have been identified with sites near Beth-el, where Absalom's estate must have lain.

26. In default of the king, Absalom doubtless gave out that he would be honoured by the presence of the heir-apparent.

27. The Greek text shows that a line has fallen out at the end of the Hebrew. The last two lines of the MS. each ended in the word for 'king,' and the copyist's eye passed inadvertently from the one to the other (*homoeoteleuton* as in verse 34, cf. 1 Sam. x. 1). Read: 'and Absalom made a feast like the feast of a king.'

29. Amnon's assassination causes a panic among the royal guests. The mule is here mentioned for the first time (but see on 1 Sam. xxi. 7). In this reign it seems to have supplanted the ass as the mount of royalty (1 Kings i. 33) and of the royal family. The horse was used only for the war-chariots (see on viii. 4). The breeding of mules and other hybrids was forbidden by the later legislation (Lev. xix. 19).

manded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man
gat him up upon his mule, and fled. And it came to 30
pass, while they were in the way, that the tidings came to
David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons,
and there is not one of them left. Then the king arose, 31
and rent his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his
servants stood by with their clothes rent. And Jonadab, 32
the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said,
Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the
young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead:
for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined
from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.
Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to 33
his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for
Amnon only is dead. But Absalom fled. And the 34
young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and
looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way

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32. for by the appointment (*lit.* mouth) **of Absalom**, &c. The sentence is obscure in the original; it is now usual to read, 'for upon the mouth' (better perhaps 'the face') 'of Absalom there hath been a scowl since the day,' &c. (so Ewald, *History of Israel*, iii. 172; cf. Driver, *Notes* in loc.), a graphic touch worthy of our court historian (C).

34. But Absalom fled. The threefold repetition of this statement (verses 34, 37, 38) is suspicious. Here we have probably a corruption of the last words of Jonadab's speech: 'and the rest of his brethren are safe' (Klost., Budde). On this follows an incident of which the scene in xviii. 25 ff. affords a close parallel. The LXX (slightly emended by Wellhausen) has preserved the full text of the original, reading in the second half of the verse: 'and behold there came much people by the **way** of the two Beth-horons, on the descent; and the watchman came and told the king, saying, I see men coming from the **way** of the two Beth-horons on the hill-side.' The scribe of the Hebrew MS. passed from the one **way** to the other, omitting the two lines between. The curious expression **behind him** in the text is now seen to be a corruption of *Ḥōrōnaim*, the two Beth-horons, upper and lower (Josh. xvi. 3, 5), halfway between Jerusalem and Lydda.

35 of the hill side behind him. And Jonadab said unto the
king, Behold, the king's sons are come: as thy servant
36 said, so it is. And it came to pass, as soon as he had
made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons
came, and lifted up their voice, and wept: and the king
37 also and all his servants wept very sore. But Absalom
fled, and went to Talmai the son of Ammihur, king of
Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day.

38 So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there
39 three years. And *the soul of* king David longed to go
forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning
Amnon, seeing he was dead.

14 Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the
2 king's heart was toward Absalom. And Joab sent to

37–39. The text of these verses is clearly overloaded (cf. 38ª = 37ª). Three points are emphasized by the historian, Absalom's flight, David's mourning for his first-born, and finally the growth of an intense longing on David's part for the absent Absalom.

37. Talmai the son of Ammihur, king of Geshur: read, with R.V. marg., 'Ammihud' (Num. i. 10, &c.). He was the father of Absalom's mother Maacah. For **Geshur** see on iii. 3 and x. 6. Here Absalom remained three years, so that this chapter covers the space of five years (see verse 23). When the chapter opens David had already been twenty years, more or less, on the united throne, since the sons born in Hebron are now grown up.

39. The Hebrew text is unintelligible. The italics of R.V. have been supplied from LXX (L). The sense, if not the text, is: 'and David's spirit was consumed with a longing for Absalom.' The historian thus prepares his readers for the next chapter of this closely articulated story.

(*c*) xiv. *Joab by a ruse secures Absalom's return and ultimate pardon.*

Absalom's full forgiveness is brought about by two stages. In the first, Joab obtains David's permission to bring the prince back to Jerusalem. Here he continues for two years in partial disgrace until Joab is again persuaded to intervene, when a full reconciliation of father and son is brought about. The whole is a striking testimony at once to Joab's affection for his sovereign (note verse 1) and to the unique position which he occupied at David's court.

Tekoa, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto
her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put
on mourning apparel, I pray thee, and anoint not thyself
with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned
for the dead: and go in to the king, and speak on this 3
manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth.
And when the woman of Tekoa spake to the king, she 4
fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and
said, Help, O king. And the king said unto her, What 5
aileth thee? And she answered, Of a truth I am a widow
woman, and mine husband is dead. And thy handmaid 6
had two sons, and they two strove together in the field,
and there was none to part them, but the one smote the
other, and killed him. And, behold, the whole family 7
is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver
him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the
life of his brother whom he slew, and so destroy the heir
also: thus shall they quench my coal which is left, and

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2. **Tekoa:** the birthplace of Amos, about six miles south of Beth-lehem.

4. **spake to the king:** read, with some Hebrew MSS. and all Versions, 'came to the king,' as the ultimate court of appeal in matters of justice.

7. The whole clan to which the brothers belonged took upon themselves, according to tribal law and custom, the duty of blood-revenge, that is, of securing the death of the murderer as punishment for the life he had taken. The task of finding and slaying the murderer was delegated by the clan to one of their number, the *gôel* or 'avenger of blood' (verse 11). For details of this ancient institution of blood-revenge see the articles 'Goel' in *EBi.* (Driver) and Hastings' *DB.* (Kennedy). The incident before us is instructive as showing how under the monarchy the central authority had already begun to exercise a salutary control over the excesses of tribal zeal.

and so destroy the heir also: a clever insinuation that the desire to secure the survivor's property was also an element in the case.

quench my coal which is left: a pathetic figure for the extinction of one's family as explained in the following clause.

shall leave to my husband neither name nor remainder
8 upon the face of the earth. And the king said unto the
woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge
9 concerning thee. And the woman of Tekoa said unto
the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and
on my father's house: and the king and his throne be
10 guiltless. And the king said, Whosoever saith aught
unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee
11 any more. Then said she, I pray thee, let the king
remember the LORD thy God, that the avenger of blood
destroy not any more, lest they destroy my son. And he
said, As the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy
12 son fall to the earth. Then the woman said, Let thine
handmaid, I pray thee, speak a word unto my lord the
13 king. And he said, Say on. And the woman said,
Wherefore then hast thou devised such a thing against
the people of God? for in speaking this word the king
is as one which is guilty, in that the king doth not fetch

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9 ff. 'These verses,' says Budde, 'furnish an exquisite picture of female loquacity and insistence and of royal forbearance' (cf. this distinguished commentator's criticism of Abigail, p. 165 above). Instead, however, of regarding this 'picture from the life' as showing how careful a Hebrew king had to be in dealing with his free subjects (Budde), we would rather see in it a reflection of two excellent traits in David's character—his sympathy with his subjects, and his desire to deal out even-handed justice to all.

11. the avenger of blood: see on verse 7. The king, as requested, swears 'by the life of Yahweh' that the avenger's hand shall be stayed.

12 ff. The woman has gained her case and now proceeds to apply her parable. Verse 13 consists of three sentences, of which the last, **in that the king,** &c., is explanatory of **such a thing** in the first sentence, while the second is merely a parenthesis. The sense of the whole is that the king stands self-convicted of acting like the avenger of blood who sought to slay the woman's son and heir, for by keeping Absalom in exile David is depriving **the people of God** of the heir to their throne.

home again his banished one. For we must needs die, 14
and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be
gathered up again; neither doth God take away life, but
deviseth means, that he that is banished be not an
outcast from him. Now therefore seeing that I am come 15
to speak this word unto my lord the king, it is because
the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid
said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the
king will perform the request of his servant. For the 16
king will hear, to deliver his servant out of the hand of
the man that would destroy me and my son together
out of the inheritance of God. Then thine handmaid 17
said, Let, I pray thee, the word of my lord the king be
comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the

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14. A difficult verse, the second half being particularly obscure. Two things are clear, (1) that **he that is banished** must here, as in verse 13, represent Absalom, and therefore (2) that the latter half of the verse cannot, as in our R. V. rendering, be a general statement of God's long-suffering mercy to sinners. Ewald's simple emendation, now generally accepted, gives the following: 'but God will not take away the life of him who deviseth[1] means whereby one that is banished may not remain banished from Him.' In the first half of the verse, accordingly, the wise woman suggests that at any moment it may be too late to show kindness to Absalom, so uncertain and irrevocable are human life and opportunity; in the second half she conveys to David an assurance of long life and Divine favour should he now bring back his son, for in so doing he would restore to Yahweh and His worship one who, in being banished from the soil of Canaan, was *ipso facto* banished from the more immediate presence of Yahweh. For this thought see on 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

15-17. With verse 14 the woman has clearly reached the end of her commission, which verse 18 shows that David now understood. It is surprising, therefore, to find her in these verses reverting to her original suit, and there is much to be said for the view that verses 15-17 originally stood between verses 7 and 8 (Cook, *Amer. Journ. of Sem. Languages*, 1900, Budde in loc.).

17. as an angel of God: the woman ascribes to David a more

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[1] Reading חושב for וחשב.

king to discern good and bad: and the Lord thy God
18 be with thee. Then the king answered and said unto
the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, aught that
I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the
19 king now speak. And the king said, Is the hand of
Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and
said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn
to the right hand or to the left from aught that my lord
the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me,
and he put all these words in the mouth of thine
20 handmaid: to change the face of the matter hath thy
servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise,
according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all
21 things that are in the earth. And the king said unto
Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore,
22 bring the young man Absalom again. And Joab fell to
the ground on his face, and did obeisance, and blessed
the king: and Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth
that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in
that the king hath performed the request of his servant.
23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom
24 to Jerusalem. And the king said, Let him turn to his
own house, but let him not see my face. So Absalom
turned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

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than human clearness of perception to discern the right; cf. verse 20, xix. 27.

19. The woman's reply begins with 'an admiring testimony to the king's shrewdness.'

24. David's vacillating treatment of his sons has already been characterized as a serious blemish in his character (see on xiii. 21). When he ought to have exercised discipline he was inexcusably indulgent. Now when he might be expected to be indulgent and forgiving, he is unnecessarily harsh. Humanly speaking, David might have escaped the crowning sorrow of his life, had he now fully forgiven his impulsive and ambitious son instead of leaving him to brood longer in solitude, exposed to the deterioration of

[Z] Now in all Israel there was none to be so much 25
praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his
foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish
in him. And when he polled his head, (now it was at 26
every year's end that he polled it: because *the hair* was
heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the
hair of his head at two hundred shekels, after the king's
weight. And unto Absalom there were born three sons, 27
and one daughter, whose name was Tamar: she was a
woman of a fair countenance.

[C] And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem; 28
and he saw not the king's face. Then Absalom sent for 29
Joab, to send him to the king; but he would not come
to him: and he sent again a second time, but he would
not come. Therefore he said unto his servants, See, 30
Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go
and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field
on fire. Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto 31
his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy

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character which such unexpected treatment would inevitably produce.

25–27. A paragraph of later date eulogizing Absalom's personal beauty, and giving information regarding his family which can scarcely be reconciled with the data of the older narrative (xviii. 18).

26. two hundred shekels, after the king's weight. This unique expression seems to be modelled on the legends on Assyrian weights, and is now generally regarded as an indication of the origin of the paragraph in the post-exilic period, the **king** in question being the Persian over-lord. The weight here given has been estimated by the present writer at $3\frac{5}{7}$ lb. avoirdupois (Hastings' *DB.* iv. 904[a]).

27. With the statements of this verse cf. xviii. 18 (which see) and 1 Kings xv. 2.

xiv. 28–33. *The final reconciliation of David and Absalom.*

29. Joab's refusal to obey the prince's summons shows that his intervention two years before was due to consideration for the father, and not to a desire to stand well with the son.

32 servants set my field on fire? And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it were better for me to be there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if
33 there be iniquity in me, let him kill me. So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

15 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before
2 him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man had a suit which should come to the king for judgement, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the

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33. Absalom's desperate plan for securing an interview with the all-powerful minister is successful. So, too, is his crave for a full pardon, of which his father's kiss is the token and pledge.

D. 2 Sam. xv–xix. *The Story of Absalom's Rebellion.*

Five well-marked stages are traceable in this narrative of Absalom's ill-fated attempt to usurp the throne, viz. (*a*) xv. 1–12, the antecedents and outbreak of the revolt; (*b*) xv. 13—xvi. 14, David retires from the capital to the east of the Jordan; (*c*) xvi. 15—xvii. 19, Absalom's occupation of Jerusalem and other incidents; (*d*) xviii. 1—xix. 8^a, Absalom's death and David's grief; (*e*) xix. 8^b–43, David's return to Jerusalem.

(*a*) xv. 1–12. *The antecedents and outbreak of the revolt.*

1. Some time after his restoration to favour—how long after is not stated—Absalom assumes the state belonging to the successor to the throne. A chariot, horses, and runners were marks of royalty (1 Sam. viii. 11). Cf. Adonijah's similar pretensions, 1 Kings i. 5.

2–7. Absalom next lays himself out to curry favour with the people by employing the usual arts of the popularity-hunter and demagogue.

tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy 3
matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed
of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh 4
that I were made judge in the land, that every man
which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and
I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any 5
man came nigh to do him obeisance, he put forth his
hand, and took hold of him, and kissed him. And on 6
this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the
king for judgement: so Absalom stole the hearts of the
men of Israel.

And it came to pass at the end of forty years, that 7
Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and
pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in
Hebron. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode 8
at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall indeed
bring me again to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.
And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, 9
and went to Hebron. But Absalom sent spies through- 10

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6. stole the hearts of the men of Israel. This expression does not mean that Absalom captivated the affections of his father's subjects, but that he duped or befooled them as Jacob duped Laban (Gen. xxxi. 20, 26, where the same expression is used). The heart in Hebrew psychology was the seat of intellect and conscience rather than of feeling.

7 ff. Absalom raises the standard of revolt at Hebron, whither he had gone under pretext of a vow made while he was in exile. In reality he had probably discovered that the ancient city of Hebron still bore David a grudge for removing the seat of government to Jerusalem, and that the allied clans of the Negeb, through whose good offices David had first mounted the throne, were jealous of the power and influence with the king of the northern tribes, now 'the predominant partner' in the united kingdom.

forty years: a clerical error for 'four' (Lucian, &c.), to be reckoned probably from the date of the final reconciliation.

10. sent spies: rather, 'sent secret messengers.' A good deal must be read between the lines here. The seeds of disaffection

out all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear
the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom is
11 king in Hebron. And with Absalom went two hundred
men out of Jerusalem, that were invited, and went in
12 their simplicity; and they knew not any thing. And
Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's
counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he
offered the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong;
for the people increased continually with Absalom.

13 And there came a messenger to David, saying, The
14 hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And
David said unto all his servants that were with him at
Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for else none of us

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had been sedulously sown by Absalom in the preceding four years, and now he hoped to reap the crop.

12. Ahithophel the Gilonite: or native of **Giloh**, probably *Jala*, six or seven miles north-west of Hebron. Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bath-sheba (see on xi. 3), and his espousal of Absalom's cause is usually attributed to a desire to avenge the disgrace in which David had involved his family, as well as the murder of Uriah.

while he offered the sacrifices, which accompanied the coronation ceremony (1 Sam. xi. 15). By whom Absalom was anointed (see xix. 10) is not stated.

(*b*) xv. 13—xvi. 14. *David retires from the capital to the east of the Jordan.*

David is evidently taken completely by surprise. The reasons for his hasty resolution to leave his fortified capital are not clear from the narrative before us. Had he grounds for suspecting the loyalty of the population, perhaps still predominantly Jebusite? Of no single day in the whole course of the recorded history of the Hebrews have we so detailed a record as we have of the day on which David fled before his undutiful son. From the time when, in the morning hours, he passed in haste through the eastern gate until, before the next day had dawned (xvii. 22), he and all his following had safely crossed the Jordan, every hour is crowded with life and incident, and every line of the narrative is instinct with the emotions and impulses, good and bad, that mould the lives of men.

14. all his servants: here, and elsewhere in this narrative, the chief officers of the court.

shall escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest
he overtake us quickly, and bring down evil upon us,
and smite the city with the edge of the sword. And the 15
king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants
are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall choose.
And the king went forth, and all his household after him. 16
And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to
keep the house. And the king went forth, and all the 17
people after him; and they tarried in Beth-merhak.
And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the 18
Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites,
six hundred men which came after him from Gath,
passed on before the king. Then said the king to Ittai 19
the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return,
and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and
also an exile; *return* to thine own place. Whereas thou 20

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17 ff. The difficulties of these verses have been solved in large measure by Wellhausen (*Text der Bücher Samuelis*) with the help of the LXX. (1) The words **all the people** of verse 17 and **all his servants** of verse 18 must change places (so LXX); (2) for **in Beth-merhak** (*lit.* 'the house of distance,' hence R. V. marg. 'at the Far House') read 'at the last house,' viz. on the eastern face of the ridge of Zion, above the Kidron (verse 23). In verse 17, therefore, David and his suite pass out first and halt at the last house above the Kidron. In verse 18 'all the people' (transferred from verse 17), i. e. the rank and file of the loyal troops, camp-followers, &c., march past the king, followed by the royal body-guard, now strengthened by six hundred men from Gath. For **and all the Gittites,** &c., we should probably read: 'and the men of Ittai the Gittite [of whom verse 19 leads us to expect some mention here], six hundred men,' &c.

19. The fidelity of this foreign soldier to David stands in vivid contrast to the treachery of David's son. He may have been an exile for political reasons from his native Gath, or merely a soldier of fortune. His military capacity is shown by his being put in command of a division of David's army (xviii. 2).

abide with the king: Absalom is of course intended.

an exile . . . to thine own place: a copyist's slip for 'an exile from thine own place' (LXX).

camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up
and down with us, seeing I go whither I may? return
thou, and take back thy brethren; mercy and truth be
21 with thee. And Ittai answered the king, and said, As
the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely
in what place my lord the king shall be, whether for
death or for life, even there also will thy servant be.
22 And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai
the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little
23 ones that were with him. And all the country wept
with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the
king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all
the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.
24 And, lo, Zadok also *came*, and all the Levites with him,

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20. Render: 'Yesterday was thy coming, and to-day shall I make thee,' &c. At the end three words have been dropped from the Hebrew text. Read, with LXX: 'return thou and take back thy brethren with thee, and Yahweh shew unto thee mercy and truth.'

21. Ittai's reply, which is not unworthy to stand beside Ruth i. 16 f., is not only honourable to himself, but is also a striking illustration of the magnetism which David still exercised over those that came into contact with him. Ittai's name will ever remain a synonym for gratitude to a personal benefactor, and for unselfish devotion to a losing cause, for such David's cause must have seemed at this critical juncture.

xv. 23–29. *David refuses to take the Ark with him.*

23. The text is once more in disorder. Following Wellhausen and most recent critics, we get: 'and all the land wept with a loud voice as they passed over; but the king (still) stood in the valley of the Kidron, while all the people passed over before him in the direction of the olive-tree which is in the wilderness' (so Lucian). The route lay across the Kidron, up the face of the Mount of Olives (verse 30), and over its summit (verse 32) by the then usual road to the Jordan, which must have passed a conspicuous tree near the spot where the uncultivated land began.

24. The narrator now supplements his former general statement in verse 17 (emended text), that David and his chief officers halted at the Far House beside the Kidron, by the fact that

bearing the ark of the covenant of God; and they set
down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up, until all
the people had done passing out of the city. And the 25
king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into
the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD,
he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his
habitation: but if he say thus, I have no delight in 26
thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth
good unto him. The king said also unto Zadok the 27
priest, Art thou *not* a seer? return into the city in peace,

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among these officers, as we should expect (see the entry xx. 25), were Zadok and Abiathar, the two priests with the Ark of God. The text has been tampered with by later editors, in the interests of Zadok, the founder of the later priestly caste. The introduction of the Levites also is an anachronism in the Books of Samuel (see on 1 Sam. vi. 15). Read somewhat as follows: 'And with him were Zadok and Abiathar bearing the Ark of God, and they set down the Ark of God until all the people,' &c. That the Ark should accompany the king and his troops was regarded by its custodians as a matter of course, for its presence was the presence of Yahweh and the pledge of victory (cf. 1 Sam. iv. 3 ff.).

25 f. It is almost certain that in the original text both priests were addressed throughout (note the plurals in 27^b, 28). The decision taken by David to restore the Ark 'to its place'—so expressly Lucian here—has been well characterized by Cheyne as 'probably a turning-point in Israel's, as well as in David's, religious development' (*EBi.* i. col. 305). This decision was due to scruples of conscience on the king's part, lest by taking the Ark with him he might appear as presuming to force the hand of Yahweh and so provoke the Divine anger. It may be, so David argues, that he has proved himself unworthy of the great trust which God had committed to him, in which case he leaves himself with splendid resignation in the hand of God (verse 26). Whereas, should this crisis prove but a passing trial, God will send him aid from **his habitation** on Mount Zion as effectively as if He were present in the Ark on the field of battle (see further, the note in the Appendix).

27. Art thou not **a seer?** But a priest is never called a seer, and the introduction of 'not' cannot be justified. Render, with R.V. marg., 'seest thou,' or better still, taking the words as addressed to both priests, as the LXX reads and the sequel demands: 'See now, return ye to the city in peace.'

and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and
28 Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will tarry at the
fords of the wilderness, until there come word from you
29 to certify me. Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the
ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they abode there.
30 And David went up by the ascent of the *mount of*
Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head
covered, and went barefoot: and all the people that were
with him covered every man his head, and they went up,
31 weeping as they went up. And one told David, saying,
Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.
And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel
32 of Ahithophel into foolishness. And it came to pass, that
when David was come to the top *of the ascent*, where God
was worshipped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to
meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:
33 and David said unto him, If thou passest on with me,

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28. at the fords of the wilderness: these in all probability are the two fords, *Maḥadat el-Hajlah* and *Maḥadat el-Henu*, four and three miles respectively from the mouth of the Jordan.

xv. 30–37. *Hushai is engaged by David to oppose the counsel of Ahithophel.*

30. The entire cavalcade having now passed the king, the latter follows by the road described above, with covered head (Jer. xiv. 3) and bare feet (Ezek. xxiv. 17) in token of mourning.

32. the top . . . where God was worshipped. On the summit of the Mount of Olives stood the usual sanctuary or high place (see on 1 Sam. ix. 12). In N. T. times the road to Jericho and the Jordan valley passed over the southern shoulder of the hill by way of Bethany.

Hushai the Archite: 'the border of the Archites' lay between Beth-el and Ataroth (Joshua xvi. 2, R.V.). The LXX adds David's friend,' which is to be expected here where Hushai is first introduced (cf. verse 37, and note on xvi. 16 f.).

33 ff. David unfolds a scheme by which Hushai may counteract the influence of Ahithophel, and at the same time keep the king informed of what passes in the capital. Hushai returns in time to welcome the arrival of Absalom.

then thou shalt be a burden unto me: but if thou return 34
to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant,
O king; as I have been thy father's servant in time past,
so will I now be thy servant: then shalt thou defeat for
me the counsel of Ahithophel. And hast thou not there 35
with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it
shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of
the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar
the priests. Behold, they have there with them their 36
two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's
son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing
that ye shall hear. So Hushai David's friend came into 37
the city; and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

And when David was a little past the top *of the ascent*, **16**
behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him,
with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two
hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred clusters of
raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of
wine. And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou 2
by these? And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's
household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit
for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as
be faint in the wilderness may drink. And the king said, 3
And where is thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the
king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-
day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of

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xvi. 1–4. David and the crafty Ziba (ix. 2 ff.), another of those personal interviews which are the feature of this section.

1. Cf. Abigail's present, 1 Sam. xxv. 18. There the figs were dried and pressed, here they are brought in their fresh state as **summer fruits** (Amos viii. 1), showing that the season was early summer, probably the month of June.

3. An *ex-parte* statement, almost certainly false in view of the greater verisimilitude of xix. 25 ff.

4 my father. Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine is
all that pertaineth unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said,
I do obeisance; let me find favour in thy sight, my lord,
O king.

5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there
came out thence a man of the family of the house of
Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came
6 out, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at
David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the
people and all the mighty men were on his right hand
7 and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed,
Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and man of Belial:
8 the LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the
house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and
the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of
Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art *taken* in thine
9 own mischief, because thou art a man of blood. Then
said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why
should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go
10 over, I pray thee, and take off his head. And the king
said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?
Because he curseth, and because the LORD hath said

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xvi. 5–14. *Shimei curses his king.*

5. Bahurim lay, as we learn here, on the road leading to the fords of the Jordan (see on xvii. 20), within the territory of Benjamin. Shimei's hostility to David was doubtless of ancient date, since he belonged to the same Benjamite clan as did the family of Saul.

7 f. thou man of blood . . . all the blood of the house of Saul. This sweeping charge need not be confined to the tragedy of ch. xxi, which comes from a different source; it is better explained by a reference to iii. 1.

9. let me go over, &c. For a similar request on the part of this Hebrew Hotspur, see 1 Sam. xxvi. 8.

10. Because he curseth, &c. Read as in 11^b: 'Let him curse; if the LORD hath said,' &c. (so most moderns, cf. margin).

unto him, Curse David; who then shall say, Wherefore
hast thou done so? And David said to Abishai, and to 11
all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my
bowels, seeketh my life: how much more *may* this
Benjamite now *do it*? let him alone, and let him curse;
for the LORD hath bidden him. It may be that the 12
LORD will look on the wrong done unto me, and that the
LORD will requite me good for *his* cursing of me this
day. So David and his men went by the way: and 13
Shimei went along on the hill side over against him, and
cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast
dust. And the king, and all the people that were with 14
him, came weary; and he refreshed himself there.

And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, 15
came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. And it 16
came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend,

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12. the LORD will look on the wrong done unto me. Read with the Versions and margin: 'the LORD will look on mine affliction' (1 Sam. i. 11, ix. 16). David's mood is still that of resignation to the Divine will (see on xv. 25 ff.).

13. on the hill side over against him: rather, 'on the hill side parallel with him,' of course higher up the hill.

14. The name of the place to which the company **came weary** has fallen out. The Hebrew word for 'weary' is put in the margin as a proper name, 'to Ayephim,' which is very improbable. Lucian has 'to the Jordan,' which may be right (see on xvii. 16).

(*c*) xvi. 15—xvii. 29. *Absalom occupies Jerusalem: Ahithophel and Hushai*, &c.

The historian now turns to the duel between the two counsellors, starting from the usurper's arrival in Jerusalem, which has already been mentioned by anticipation (xv. 37).

15. Absalom and all the men of Israel: so read with LXX (B), **the people** having come in from the preceding verse. 'Throughout the narrative "all the people" are with David, "all the men of Israel" are with Absalom' (Driver).

16 f. Absalom's play upon the word **friend** suggests that the designation **David's friend** was not first given to Hushai by the historian, but was a court title. The 'king's friend' is a title

was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Ab-
17 salom, God save the king, God save the king. And
Absalom said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy
18 friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend? And
Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the LORD,
and this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen,
19 his will I be, and with him will I abide. And again,
whom should I serve? *should I* not *serve* in the presence
of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so
20 will I be in thy presence. Then said Absalom to
21 Ahithophel, Give your counsel what we shall do. And
Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's
concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and
all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father:
then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong.
22 So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house;
and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the
23 sight of all Israel. And the counsel of Ahithophel,
which he counselled in those days, was as if a man
inquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of
Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

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found at the court of Egypt from an early period, as later among the Ptolemies (Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, 167 ff.) and the Seleucids (1 Macc. ii. 18, x. 65). Similarly, Zabud the son of Nathan was 'the king's friend' at the court of Solomon (1 Kings iv. 5).

18 f. Hushai argues (1) that the *vox Dei* and the *vox populi* have united in the choice of Absalom, and (2) that after all he is merely transferring his allegiance from the father to the son. The narrator leaves us to infer that Hushai was thereupon admitted into the inner circle of the new court.

20–23. On Ahithophel's advice Absalom takes over part of his father's harem. The crafty adviser urges this step on grounds of public policy. It would be a proof to **all Israel** that the breach between father and son was now beyond hope of healing. Absalom's friends would thereby be strengthened in their allegiance (verse 21, end), and the waverers brought over to his side. At the same time it would be evidence to all and sundry that Absalom

Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now 17
choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and
pursue after David this night: and I will come upon him 2
while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him
afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee;
and I will smite the king only: and I will bring back all 3
the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as
if all returned: *so* all the people shall be in peace. And 4
the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of
Israel.

Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, 5
and let us hear likewise what he saith. And when 6
Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him,
saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall
we do *after* his saying? if not, speak thou. And Hushai 7
said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath

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was *de facto* king, and was exercising his rights as David's successor (see on xii. 8).

xvii. 1–14. *The duel between the counsellors.*

1. Ahithophel begs to be allowed to set out immediately in pursuit of David, arguing that the death of the latter is all that is required to secure the undivided allegiance of the people to Absalom and the re-establishment of peace.

this night: the night following the eventful day into which so much has been already crowded (cf. verse 16).

3. The present unintelligible text has arisen from the accidental omission of four words still preserved in the LXX: 'and I will bring back all the people unto thee as a bride returneth to her husband; thou seekest but the life of one man, and all the people shall be in peace.'

4. And the saying pleased Absalom well: nothing could better illustrate the depth of moral callousness to which the misguided prince had fallen than his approval of this cold-blooded proposal to take his father's life.

5–14 give us the contrary counsel of Hushai. This life-like picture of the *divan* of the sheikhs—to give the council of the elders (verse 4) its oriental designation—with its highly metaphorical and somewhat bombastic rhetoric, is painted in the true colours of the Semitic orient.

8 given this time is not good. Hushai said moreover,
Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be
mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a
bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father is
a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.
9 Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some *other*
place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be
fallen at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say,
There is a slaughter among the people that follow
10 Absalom. And even he that is valiant, whose heart is
as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel
knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which
11 be with him are valiant men. But I counsel that all
Israel be gathered together unto thee, from Dan even to
Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude;
12 and that thou go to battle in thine own person. So
shall we come upon him in some place where he shall

---

8. will not lodge with the people: an obscure phrase. If the text is right, it may mean that, as a precaution against surprise, David would camp apart from the rank and file, surrounded by his faithful bodyguard.

9. The second half of the verse describes what will happen when the two sides engage. Read probably: 'when he (David) falleth upon the people (R. V. marg.), and some of them fall at the first attack' (Budde).

10. A panic among Absalom's untrained levies would be the result of a formal engagement with David's veterans—a very plausible forecast.

11. The two points of Hushai's counter-proposal are (1) that a much larger force was needed than Absalom as yet had at his command, and (2) that the new king's presence with his troops was indispensable (contrast verse 1). This latter argument was an adroit appeal to the usurper's personal vanity. The speaker's real object was, of course, to gain time for David to mature his plan of campaign, and to collect the necessary troops.

to battle: read with the Versions, 'in their midst'—'with thy Majesty [*lit.* 'thy presence,' see R. V. marg.] marching in the midst of them' (H. P. Smith).

be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that are with him we will not leave so much as one. Moreover, 13
if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there. And Absalom 14
and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the 15
priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I
counselled. Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, 16
saying, Lodge not this night at the fords of the wilderness, but in any wise pass over; lest the king be swallowed
up, and all the people that are with him. Now Jonathan 17

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13. Render, as in the margin: 'if he withdraw himself into a (fortified) city'; the whole is a fine specimen of rhetorical exaggeration.

14b. The historian's comment on the result of the duel, forming the Hebrew counterpart and illustration of the familiar maxim, *Quem vult perdere Deus prius dementat.*

xvii. 15–21. *Hushai communicates with David as arranged.*

The reason for such urgency as Hushai recommends, which seems unnecessary in the altered circumstances, was doubtless his fear that Absalom might after all revert to Ahithophel's proposal (cf. verse 21 end). Hushai's policy, like that of the Bruce's friend Kirkpatrick, was to 'mak siccar.'

17. As compared with A. V. and R. V. marg., the text of R. V. alone does justice to the frequentative tenses of the original. These imply that regular communication between David and Hushai was kept up for some time through the priests' sons as intermediaries. The latter, again, were kept in touch with Hushai by a slave-girl as go-between. Such was the situation while David and Absalom were respectively collecting their forces

and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel; and a maidservant
used to go and tell them; and they went and told king
David: for they might not be seen to come into the
18 city. But a lad saw them, and told Absalom: and they
went both of them away quickly, and came to the house
of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his court; and
19 they went down thither. And the woman took and
spread the covering over the well's mouth, and strewed
20 bruised corn thereon; and nothing was known. And
Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house; and
they said, Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the
woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of
water. And when they had sought and could not find
21 them, they returned to Jerusalem. And it came to pass,
after they were departed, that they came up out of the
well, and went and told king David; and they said unto
David, Arise ye, and pass quickly over the water: for
22 thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you. Then
David arose, and all the people that were with him,
and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light
there lacked not one of them that was not gone over
23 Jordan. And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was
not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him

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on either side of the Jordan. Verses 18 ff. tell of a particular incident of the situation sketched above.

stayed by En-rogel: 'the fuller's spring,' now usually identified with the modern *Bir Eyyûb* (Job's well), at the south-east of Jerusalem, where the valley of Hinnom joins the valley of the Kidron.

20. the brook of water: the first word is extremely doubtful (see Driver, in loc.). Budde would read: 'they be gone hurriedly (so Vulgate, *festinanter*) over the water,' i.e. the Jordan, as in verse 21. This helps us to locate **Bahurim** as at no great distance from the river, probably in the neighbourhood of Beth-hoglah (see on xix. 15 f.).

23. Deeply chagrined at the failure of his scheme, in which home, unto his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself; and he died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed 24
over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.
And Absalom set Amasa over the host instead of Joab. 25
Now Amasa was the son of a man, whose name was
Ithra the Israelite, that went in to Abigal the daughter
of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother. And Israel 26
and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

And it came to pass, when David was come to 27
Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of
the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel
of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,
brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and 28
wheat, and barley, and meal, and parched *corn*, and
beans, and lentils, and parched *pulse*, and honey, and 29

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private revenge doubtless played a leading motive (see on xv. 12), and at being superseded in Absalom's confidence by his rival, Ahithophel dies by his own hand, a victim of wounded pride and disappointed ambition.

24 ff. David proceeds to **Mahanaim** (see on ii. 8), which he makes his head quarters. Absalom follows in due course with Amasa in command of his levies. The latter is now curiously described as the son of **Ithra the Israelite.** Since only foreigners like Uriah and Ittai are designated in this way by their nationality, the Chronicler's reading is to be preferred (see margin), viz.: 'the son of Jether the Ishmaelite.' Through his mother **Abigail** (so read) he was a full cousin of Absalom and Joab, and, like the latter, a nephew of David (see 1 Chron. ii. 15 ff.).

27. Shobi the son of Nahash: now apparently governor of the Ammonites, in room of his brother Hanun, the late king. For **Machir** see on ix. 4.

Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim is more fully described xix. 32 f. His home has not been identified, but his name shows that it must have lain in the Aramaic-speaking tract to the north-east.

28. parched pulse: an unheard-of food-stuff, and another of the too numerous illustrations of the Revisers' bondage to the

butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for
the people that were with him, to eat: for they said,
The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the
wilderness.

18 And David numbered the people that were with him,
and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds
2 over them. And David sent forth the people, a third
part under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the
hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a
third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the
king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you
3 myself also. But the people said, Thou shalt not go
forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us;
neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but thou
art worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better
4 that thou be ready to succour us out of the city. And
the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will
do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the
5 people went out by hundreds and by thousands. And
the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying,
Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with

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received text. The word means only 'parched corn' (1 Sam. xvii. 17), and has simply crept in from the line above.

29. cheese of kine: a doubtful rendering of a doubtful text. Probably 'dried curds' is meant (see the writer's article 'Milk,' *EBi.* iii. 3091); the text may originally have read 'and sheep'—or rather 'flocks,' for the word includes goats as well—'and cattle and dried curds.'

(*d*) xviii. 1—xix. 8. *Absalom's death and David's grief.*

2. And David sent forth the people: read with Lucian: 'and David divided the people (i. e. his forces, see Driver as quoted on xvi. 15) into three parts.' The tactics are the same as those employed by Saul against the Ammonites (1 Sam. xi. 11), with the addition of a body of reserves in Mahanaim under the king's personal command (verse 3 end).

4. A 'march past' in more hopeful circumstances than on a former occasion, xv. 17 ff.

Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave
all the captains charge concerning Absalom. So the 6
people went out into the field against Israel: and the
battle was in the forest of Ephraim. And the people of 7
Israel were smitten there before the servants of David,
and there was a great slaughter there that day of twenty
thousand men. For the battle was there spread over 8
the face of all the country: and the forest devoured
more people that day than the sword devoured. And 9
Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David. And
Absalom rode upon his mule, and the mule went under
the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught
hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the
heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him
went on. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and 10

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5. Deal gently for my sake . . . with Absalom. It is pathetic to observe how, throughout this day in which the gravest interests were at stake, David has not only no thought for himself—this we could excuse—but none for his loyal troops or for the future of his country (see xix. 5 ff.), but only for the son, 'the lad Absalom' (verses 5, 12, 29, 32), who had cast every vestige of filial affection to the winds (cf. on xvii. 4).

6. the forest of Ephraim: rather, 'the jungle of Ephraim,' an unknown locality in Gilead. Cf. G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.* 335 note.

8. and the forest devoured, &c.: the sense is uncertain. Probably the district over which the rout extended presented a rocky surface—'a sea of rocks' is Wetzstein's phrase—covered with jungle growth which concealed the clefts between the rocks into which the fugitives dropped and perished.

xviii. 9–18. *The fate of Absalom.*

9. his head caught hold of the oak, &c.: rather, 'was caught fast in the oak, and he was suspended,' &c. The popular idea that Absalom owed his death to the long hair (xiv. 26), of which he is supposed to have been unduly proud, may suit the requirements of poetic justice, but finds no support in the narrative before us. Rather we must suppose that, as he rode at full speed upon his mule, his head got wedged into the fork of a branch and was there held fast 'in the heart of the oak' (verse 14).

11 said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak. And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest it, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *pieces of* silver,
12 and a girdle. And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *pieces of* silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the
13 young man Absalom. Otherwise if I had dealt falsely against his life, (and there is no matter hid from the king,) then thou thyself wouldest have stood aloof.
14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst
15 of the oak. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.
16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the
17 people. And they took Absalom, and cast him into the

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11. ten pieces of silver: ten shekels (see on 1 Sam. ix. 8), as in A. V., which is here needlessly altered.

12. Beware, &c. A better rendering of the difficult original is that of the margin, but we should probably read with the Versions: 'Have a care for my sake (as in verse 5) of the young man, even of Absalom.'

13 f. thou wouldest have stood aloof. Joab, the soldier says, would not have lifted a finger to save him from David's wrath. Joab refuses to argue the matter, and with his own hand stabs Absalom through the heart.

15. A somewhat better connexion is got by taking the last clause of verse 14 with this verse (so Vulgate): 'and while he was yet alive . . . ten young men,' &c. However richly Absalom deserved his fate, nothing can free Joab from the charge of flagrant disobedience of his king's express command, of which, the narrator takes pains to assure us, he was thoroughly informed (see verses 5, 12).

great pit in the forest, and raised over him a very great heap of stones: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.
Now Absalom in his life time had taken and reared up 18
for himself the pillar, which is in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called Absalom's monument, unto this day.

Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now 19
run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath
avenged him of his enemies. And Joab said unto him, 20
Thou shalt not be the bearer of tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt
bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead. Then 21
said Joab to the Cushite, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And the Cushite bowed himself unto Joab, and
ran. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to 22

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18. Absalom being without male offspring, according to this early writer (see another account xiv. 27), had provided for the perpetuation of his name by the erection of a memorial **pillar in the king's dale,** a locality mentioned only here and Gen. xiv. 17, and not yet identified. According to Josephus it was two stadia from Jerusalem (*Antiquities*, VIII. x. 3).

xviii. 19–32. *How the tidings were conveyed to David.*

Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the priest, already known to us (xv. 27, xvii. 17), and a certain Ethiopian unnamed, vie with each other in the race to Mahanaim.

19. hath avenged him of his enemies: *lit.* as marg., 'hath *judged* him from the hand of his enemies,' where 'judged' is used, as in 1 Sam. xxiv. 15 end, in the sense of 'delivered.' So 'the Judges' who give their name to the book were the deliverers or liberators of their tribes.

20 f. Joab at first refuses to expose Ahimaaz to the danger involved in being the bearer of evil tidings to the king (see iv. 10), and seems to play upon the double meaning of the original as expressing both good and bad tidings. In place of Ahimaaz Joab sends a **Cushite** or Ethiopian, perhaps a slave, the risk of violent treatment being of less account in his case.

22. Ahimaaz succeeds on a second appeal, expressing himself as ready to take the risk at which Joab had hinted.

Joab, But come what may, let me, I pray thee, also run after the Cushite. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou wilt have no reward for the
23 tidings? But come what may, *said he*, I will run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the Plain, and overran the Cushite.

24 Now David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, a man
25 running alone. And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings
26 in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near. And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth
27 tidings. And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good

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23. by the way of the Plain of the Jordan (Gen. xiii. 10 f., 1 Kings vii. 46). While the Ethiopian probably took a bee-line across the difficult country to Mahanaim, his rival, who knew the route well (see on xvii. 17), made a detour to reach the high road running up the *Wadi Ajlun* from the Jordan. Though the longer, it was the easier and quicker route.

24 ff. For a companion to this graphic watch-tower scene, see 2 Kings ix. 17 ff.

David sat between the two gates: the gates, or rather gate-houses, of an Eastern city may be described as extensions outwards and inwards of the city wall, with an outer and inner gateway. The space between these was lined with stone benches, on which the elders sat 'in the gate,' as did David now and later (xix. 8). This particular gate-house had an upper story (verse 33), the roof of which was apparently on a level with the wall (verse 24).

25. If he be alone: then the runner is a courier from the battle-field; were it a case of defeat and a rout, he would be accompanied by other fugitives.

26. called unto the porter: read, with a slight change, 'and the watchman upon the gate called out and said' (cf. Lucian's Greek text).

man, and cometh with good tidings. And Ahimaaz 28
called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he
bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth,
and said, Blessed be the LORD thy God, which hath
delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against
my lord the king. And the king said, Is it well with the 29
young man Absalom? And Ahimaaz answered, When
Joab sent the king's servant, even me thy servant, I saw
a great tumult, but I knew not what it was. And the 30
king said, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned
aside, and stood still. And, behold, the Cushite came; 31
and the Cushite said, Tidings for my lord the king: for
the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that
rose up against thee. And the king said unto the 32
Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And
the Cushite answered, The enemies of my lord the king,
and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as
that young man is. And the king was much moved, and 33
went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as
he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my
son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O
Absalom, my son, my son!

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28. All is well: an unfortunate rendering. As the margin shows, Ahimaaz merely gives a shortened form of the universal greeting, 'Peace be upon thee.' It seems as if the youth's courage failed him when face to face with the king, for he finally takes refuge in a falsehood.

29. Read simply: 'When Joab sent thy servant, I saw,' &c. (Wellhausen, Budde). The rest is ungrammatical and unnecessary.

32. The negro is more courageous, and succeeds in conveying the fact of Absalom's death without naming him.

xviii. 33—xix. 8ᵃ. *David's grief and Joab's rebuke.*

33. and as he went: read with Lucian and most moderns: 'and as he wept,' a little touch which adds to the poignancy of David's grief.

19 And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and
2 mourneth for Absalom. And the victory that day was
turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people
3 heard say that day, The king grieveth for his son. And
the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as
people that are ashamed steal away when they flee in
4 battle. And the king covered his face, and the king
cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom,
5 my son, my son! And Joab came into the house to the
king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of
all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and
the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of
6 thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; in that thou
lovest them that hate thee, and hatest them that love
thee. For thou hast declared this day, that princes and
servants are nought unto thee: for this day I perceive,
that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day,
7 then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go
forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I

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xix. 2 f. These two verses are among the most perfect specimens of literary art in the O. T. With a few master-strokes the writer paints the sudden revulsion of feeling from the joy and pride of victory to the sorrow that is born of perfect sympathy with another's grief. Then follows the inimitable picture of the victorious veterans 'getting them by stealth that day into the city,' like the conscience-smitten cowards that sneak away when the day is lost, or like the thief that creeps on tip-toe to his home before the dawn. But what a man must this David have been to have so endeared himself to his men, that his personal grief became so completely theirs! Joab, the incarnation of state policy ('die verkörperte Staatsraison') as Budde elsewhere calls him, fears as sudden a revulsion of feeling in the opposite direction. (5 ff.). No one can gainsay the truth of his statements or the force of his arguments, and yet who can suppress a feeling of sympathy with the broken-hearted king?

6. The soldier's indignation here leads him into an excusable exaggeration.

7. speak comfortably unto: *lit.* 'speak to the heart of thy

swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not
tarry a man with thee this night: and that will be worse
unto thee than all the evil that hath befallen thee from
thy youth until now. Then the king arose, and sat in 8
the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying,
Behold, the king doth sit in the gate: and all the people
came before the king.

Now Israel had fled every man to his tent. And all 9
the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel,
saying, The king delivered us out of the hand of our
enemies, and he saved us out of the hand of the Philistines;
and now he is fled out of the land from Absalom.
And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in 10
battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of
bringing the king back?

And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the 11
priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying,

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servants' (cf. Isa. xl. 1). The history of popular movements in the East has proved, times without number, the accuracy of Joab's diagnosis of the oriental character.

(*e*) xix. 8^b–43. *David's return to Jerusalem.*

In his account of what followed, as of what preceded the crisis of the rebellion (chaps. xv, xvi), the historian has cast the bulk of his narrative into the form of personal interviews with the king.

8. every man to his tent: not to be taken literally, but as equivalent to 'to his home.' This archaism is a survival from the nomadic period of Hebrew history, and is frequently found in the historical books (1 Sam. iv. 10, xiii. 2, &c.).

9 f. The common sense of the nation once more asserts itself. The people recall the benefits which David had conferred, and chide their leaders for the delay in bringing back their rightful king. The original continuation of verse 10 must be restored from 11^b: 'and the speech of all Israel came to (the ears of) the king' (so the Versions and most moderns).

xix. 11–15. *David's secret overtures to the tribe of Judah.*

Himself a member of the tribe whose ancient sanctuary had been the focus of the rebellion, David, with his statesman's eye, saw in the new situation a favourable opportunity of binding the southern

Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, *to*
12 *bring him* to his house. Ye are my brethren, ye are my bone and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to
13 bring back the king? And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me
14 continually in the room of Joab. And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as *the heart of* one man; so that they sent unto the king, *saying*, Return
15 thou, and all thy servants. So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to bring the king over Jordan.

16 And Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite, which was of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men

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clans anew to his person. Accordingly he opens negotiations with the sheikhs through his faithful allies, Zadok and Abiathar. In thus playing off the South against the North, David was doubtless aware of the risk he ran of increasing the jealousy, already of long standing, between them, but in the circumstances David can scarcely be blamed for seeing in his southern kinsfolk, in the men who, as he says, were his bone and his flesh (verse 12), the natural support of his dynasty.

11. to bring the king back to his house: the plea of kinship put forward in the following verse favours the rendering 'to bring the king home again,' a significant addition to the northmen's phrase in verse 10. The reason why the sheikhs of Judah held back is evident enough (see note above), and is all to their credit.

13. Amasa, David's nephew, is offered the post of commander-in-chief, Joab having forfeited his sovereign's confidence by his flagrant disobedience of orders in the matter of Absalom. He who would command must first learn to obey.

15. The representatives of Judah go to meet David at the entrance to their own territory, in all probability at the ford of *El-Hajla*, which preserves the name of Beth-hoglah, in the neighbourhood of Gilgal (Josh. xv. 6 f.).

16 ff. The first of the personal interviews to which reference was made above is that between David and Shimei. The introduction of Ziba (17^b, 18^a) is a parenthesis which should be

of Judah to meet king David. And there were a 17
thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the
servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his
twenty servants with him; and they went through Jordan
in the presence of the king. And there went over a 18
ferry boat to bring over the king's household, and to do
what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera
fell down before the king, when he was come over
Jordan. And he said unto the king, Let not my lord 19
impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that
which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord
the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should
take it to his heart. For thy servant doth know that I 20
have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come this day the
first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my
lord the king. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered 21
and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this,
because he cursed the LORD's anointed? And David 22

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rendered thus: 'Now Ziba . . . with him, had dashed through the Jordan in the presence of the king and kept crossing (and recrossing) the ford'—the word rendered 'ferry boat' in the text of R.V.—'to bring over the king's household.' Ziba's fifteen sons and twenty servants carried the women and children and some perhaps of the dainty courtiers through the ford. Foreseeing the day of reckoning, the crafty Ziba hastens to render David a service, and thus, like the unjust steward, secure at least one entry to his credit. At the end of verse 18 render with the margin: 'when he would go over Jordan,' the king being still on the eastern bank.

20. It is noteworthy that Shimei, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, claims to belong to **the house of Joseph.** Cf. Judges i. 22, and for the conclusions that have been drawn from this and from the name Benjamin ('men of the south') as to the historical origin of the tribe, see Hope Hogg's article 'Benjamin' in *EBi.*

21. Abishai, impulsive and bloodthirsty as ever (see on xvi. 9), intervenes with the reminder that Shimei had been guilty of blasphemy. Only here, in this narrative (C), is the expression 'the LORD's anointed' applied to David.

22 f. David asserts his royal prerogative of mercy in face of the

said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah,
that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall
there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do
23 not I know that I am this day king over Israel? And
the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the
king sware unto him.

24 And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet
the king; and he had neither dressed his feet, nor
trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day
the king departed until the day he came home in peace.
25 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to
meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore
26 wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? And he
answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me:
for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may
ride thereon, and go with the king; because thy servant
27 is lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my
lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of
28 God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes. For all
my father's house were but dead men before my lord the

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masterful and unforgiving sons of Zeruiah, refusing to mar the joy of so auspicious a day by further bloodshed. For the ultimate fate of Shimei and the difficult questions raised by it, see Skinner on 1 Kings ii in this series (Century Bible).

24 ff. The second interview—David and Meri-baal (Mephibosheth), here described loosely as **the son of Saul** (cf. ix. 7, 'Saul thy father'). During the whole period of David's absence from Jerusalem he had lived as a mourner.

neither dressed his feet: render, as in the original text of LXX, 'neither trimmed his toe-nails'—Lucian adds 'nor his finger-nails'—'nor his beard,' &c. The verb is the same for both operations (*lit.* 'to do'); cf. Deut. xxi. 12, where it is rendered 'to pare (the nails),' and has reference, as here, to the intermission of the care of the person during the period of mourning. In the next verse read, of course, 'when he was come *from* Jerusalem.'

27. as an angel of God: the embodiment of wisdom to discern the right, as xiv. 17, 20. The last clause, 'do therefore' &c., belongs to the next verse.

king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that
did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I
yet that I should cry any more unto the king? And the 29
king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy
matters? I say, Thou and Ziba divide the land. And 30
Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all,
forasmuch as my lord the king is come in peace unto his
own house.

And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim; 31
and he went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him
over Jordan. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even 32
fourscore years old: and he had provided the king with
sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very
great man. And the king said unto Barzillai, Come 33
thou over with me, and I will sustain thee with me in
Jerusalem. And Barzillai said unto the king, How 34
many are the days of the years of my life, that I should
go up with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day 35
fourscore years old: can I discern between good and
bad? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink?

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29. The king's impatience is more forcibly brought out by Lucian's text, 'why wilt thou further multiply words.'

30. Yea, let him take all: from Western lips this would be set down as the sarcasm of a disappointed man, but in reality it has a fine flavour of oriental etiquette.

31 ff. The third interview—David and Barzillai. The latter had been David's host at Mahanaim, and has now escorted his guest as far as the Jordan. The narrative has become obscured through the ambiguity of the verb 'to pass over, cross,' which also means 'to pass on,' &c. Read here: 'and Barzillai . . . passed on with the king to conduct him to the Jordan.' The text has suffered in the same way in verses 36, 40.

34 ff. Barzillai's two reasons for declining the king's invitation. (1) The tree was too old to bear transplanting; (2) age had dulled both his senses and his faculties so that he could hope neither to appreciate the dainties of the royal table nor to enjoy the refinements of court life.

can I hear any more the voice of singing men and
singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be
36 yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant would
but just go over Jordan with the king: and why should
37 the king recompense it me with such a reward? Let thy
servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in
mine own city, by the grave of my father and my mother.
But behold, thy servant Chimham; let him go over with
my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good
38 unto thee. And the king answered, Chimham shall go
over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem
good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of
39 me, that will I do for thee. And all the people went over
Jordan, and the king went over: and the king kissed
Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his
own place.

40 So the king went over to Gilgal, and Chimham went
over with him: and all the people of Judah brought the
41 king over, and also half the people of Israel. And,
behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said

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35. the voice of singing men and singing women: David's interest in music is also attested by our oldest literary prophet, Amos vi. 5.

36. Render: 'Thy servant would pass on with (or, accompany) the king but a little way,' deleting **Jordan**, which has come in through a scribe taking the verb in the more usual sense of passing over, see above.

39. the king went over: this is premature (see below), and we must read with Lucian, 'but the king stood still' (Smith, Budde). As in xv. 23, where the same error has crept in, the troops march past the king, who is stationed with Barzillai on the east bank of the Jordan.

40. Now, at last, David crosses the river to find the men of Judah waiting to welcome and escort him (see verse 15). Render however: 'and all the people of Judah passed on with the king, and also half the people of Israel.'

41. The northern representatives complain to the king that their southern fellow subjects had stolen a march upon them—for

unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and brought the king, and his household, over Jordan, and all David's men with him? And 42
all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath he given us any gift? And the men of 43
Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

And there happened to be there a man of Belial, **20**

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the true explanation see pp. 285 ff.—and were present in their full strength to welcome the king, while only a fraction apparently (note 'half the people of Israel,' verse 40) of the north men had had time to assemble. The last clause should perhaps be read, with the slightest possible change, 'and *all* David's men are his people' (Smith, Budde), i.e. are all equally loyal and therefore entitled to equal treatment.

42. The men of Judah intervene in their own defence, claiming that theirs is the first place in the king's favour by right of kinship and of disinterested service. They protest that they had derived no advantage from their tribal connexion with David. For the difficulty of text and rendering here, see Driver's *Notes* in loc.

43. The men of Israel retort with the argument of numbers. For the **ten parts** cf. 1 Kings xi. 31 f. with Skinner's note (Century Bible).

we have also more right **in David than ye:** an attempt to translate a corrupt text. Read with LXX and all modern critics: 'and I am also the firstborn rather than thou,' on which 1 Chron. v. 1 f. is the best commentary.

that our advice . . . king: rather (see R.V. marg.), 'and was not I the first to speak of bringing back my king?' (verse 10). The historian adds that the reply of the men of Judah was still more vigorous and heated, but he forbears to give it.

E. 2 Sam. xx. *The Revolt of Sheba.*

The mutual recriminations of north and south culminated, even

whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew the trumpet, and said, We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of
2 Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel. So all the men of Israel went up from following David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3 And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and provided them with sustenance, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4 Then said the king to Amasa, Call me the men of Judah together within three days, and be thou here
5 present. So Amasa went to call *the men of* Judah together: but he tarried longer than the set time which
6 he had appointed him. And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape out
7 of our sight. And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue

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before the king had left the Jordan valley, in one of the northern representatives, a Benjamite noble named Sheba, renouncing his allegiance to David, and summoning the tribes of Israel to his standard. The text is unfortunately in many places uncertain.

1. Sheba's war-cry reappears at a later crisis in the relations of north and south, 1 Kings xii. 16.

3. David's first public act on his return, necessitated by the incident recorded xvi. 21 f.

4. Amasa's commission implies that David had kept the promise of xix. 13.

7. Here we should probably read, with Graetz and later scholars: 'and there went out after Abishai, Joab and the Cherethites,'

after Sheba the son of Bichri. When they were at the 8
great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet
them. And Joab was girded with his apparel of war
that he had put on, and thereon was a girdle with a
sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and
as he went forth it fell out. And Joab said to Amasa, 9
Is it well with thee, my brother? And Joab took Amasa
by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. But 10
Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's
hand: so he smote him therewith in the belly, and shed
out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again;
and he died. And Joab and Abishai his brother pursued
after Sheba the son of Bichri. And there stood by him 11
one of Joab's young men, and said, He that favoureth
Joab, and he that is for David, let him follow Joab.
And Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the midst of 12
the high way. And when the man saw that all the
people stood still, he carried Amasa out of the high way
into the field, and cast a garment over him, when he saw
that every one that came by him stood still. When he 13

&c. For the last see on viii. 18, and for **the mighty men** see on x. 7.

8. Amasa came to meet them: Abishai and his command had only reached Gibeon, about six miles from Jerusalem, when they met Amasa on his way to the capital with the levies he had raised. The rest of the verse 'is involved and obscure, though the fact is effectively concealed in the free rendering of R. V.' Thus Driver (*Notes* in loc.) who adopts the emendation of Klostermann and reads: 'and as for Joab a sword was in his hand underneath his warrior's dress (cf. Judges iii. 16), and upon it (i.e. outside) he was girt with a sword fastened,' &c. In addition to the usual sword, which slipped from its sheath, Joab like Ehud carried another in his left hand (verse 10), concealed beneath his military cloak, and with this he stabbed Amasa.

10. Joab and Abishai his brother: from this point, by his force of character and experience, Joab becomes the real leader of the expedition.

was removed out of the high way, all the people went on
after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.
14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel,
and to Beth-maacah, and all the Berites: and they were
15 gathered together, and went also after him. And they
came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maacah, and
they cast up a mount against the city, and it stood
against the rampart: and all the people that were with
16 Joab battered the wall, to throw it down. Then cried
a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray
you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak

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14. This verse describes the progress of Sheba, not of Joab. The text, however, is in disorder, and may have originally run somewhat as follows: 'Now he (Sheba) had gone through all the tribes of Israel, but they treated him with contempt (so the consonantal text), and he came to Abel-beth-maacah, and all the Bichrites went after him.'

unto Abel and to Beth-maacah: to be read as one word as above (cf. next verse), and to be identified with the modern *Abil* on a strong site about five miles west of Dan (*Tell-el-Ḳādi*) and the same distance from the sharp bend of the Litany river.

and all the Berites: read as above, 'and all the Bichrites,' the clan to which Sheba belonged (verse 1). His following seems to have been almost confined to his own kinsfolk.

15 f. David's anticipation in verse 6 (end) was fulfilled. The details of the siege are obscured by the uncertainty of the text.

they cast up a mount: i. e. a mound of earth (cf. 2 Kings xix. 32) on which the battering-rams and other engines were mounted.

and it stood against the rampart (*ḥêl*): ancient cities were defended, as a rule, by two walls, the city-wall proper, and a lower wall at a short distance in advance of the other, termed in Hebrew the *ḥêl* or rampart. The received text represents Joab as pressing forward his mound until it reached this first wall, but for various reasons, textual and other, it is necessary after 'the city' in the preceding clause to read: 'and there came a wise woman out of the city and stood upon the rampart, while all the people that were with Joab were devising means to throw down the wall, and she said, Hear, hear,' &c. This assumes that two lines of the Hebrew MS. have been transposed (Klostermann and others).

with thee. And he came near unto her; and the woman 17
said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am. Then
she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid.
And he answered, I do hear. Then she spake, saying, 18
They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall
surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they ended *the matter*.
I am of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: 19
thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why
wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD? And 20
Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me,
that I should swallow up or destroy. The matter is not 21
so: but a man of the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba the
son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against
the king, even against David: deliver him only, and I
will depart from the city. And the woman said unto
Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the
wall. Then the woman went unto all the people in her 22
wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of

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18 f. Here again the text has suffered. By inserting the words 'counsel' and 'matter' the Revisers get a fair sense, which, however, has little bearing on the situation and leaves 19^a in its obscurity. Since Ewald (*Hist. of Israel*, iii. 195), scholars have given the preference to the Greek text, which runs: 'They were wont to quote a proverb in old time, saying, Ask in Abel and in Dan whether anything has ever fallen into disuse which the faithful of Israel had once ordained; but thou seekest to destroy,' &c. The woman, in other words, reproaches Joab with seeking to destroy a city which was famed as one of the two most faithful conservators of Hebrew manners and customs in the country.

a mother in Israel: an important and venerable city with dependent villages, which in the Hebrew idiom were called its 'daughters' (Num. xxi. 25, 32, and oftener). The phrase 'a mother in Israel' is elsewhere applied only to Deborah (Judges v. 7).

20. Joab indignantly repels the woman's impeachment. Only Sheba the traitor is the object of his quest; if he is given up the siege will be raised.

22. Read: 'Then the woman went into the city and spake unto all the people in her wisdom' (cf. LXX).

Bichri, and threw it out to Joab. And he blew the trumpet, and they were dispersed from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

23 [R] Now Joab was over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and
24 over the Pelethites: and Adoram was over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder:
25 and Sheva was scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar were
26 priests: and Ira also the Jairite was priest unto David.

21 [Z] And there was a famine in the days of David

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xx. 23-6. *A duplicate list of David's chief officers of state.* This list is a repetition, with some variations in order and contents, of that already given in viii. 16–18. Its presence here is best explained by Budde's suggestion that the editor who restored chs. ix–xx, which were probably wanting in the first edition of Samuel (see Introduction, sect. v), reproduced the list as an appropriate close to his book. The arrangement of the various offices is more logical than in ch. viii, as was noted there.

24. Adoram was over the tribute: rather, 'the labour-gangs' or levies (R. V. marg.) raised under the system of corvée or forced labour, an item omitted from the previous list. Adoram or Adoniram held this office until the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings iv. 6, xii. 18).

26. Ira . . the Jairite, a member of the Gileadite family of Jair (Num. xxxii. 41), here takes the place of David's sons in viii. 18.

Fourth Division. 2 SAMUEL XXI–XXIV.

AN APPENDIX OF VARIOUS CONTENTS.

These four chapters are universally recognized as a later appendix to the original Book (or Books) of Samuel. They interrupt the main current of the early narrative in chs. ix–xx, which is now continued in the first two chapters of the Book of Kings. The contents are of varied character, comprising two additional narratives, two poems, and two lists of David's heroes and their achievements, six sections in all. The gradual literary process by which the appendix probably assumed its present form has been indicated in the Introduction (p. 23).

three years, year after year; and David sought the face of the LORD. And the LORD said, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he put to death the Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites, and 2
said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah:) and David said unto the Gibeonites, 3
What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make

(*a*) xxi. 1–14. *The famine and its consequences for the house of Saul.*

The first and last sections of the appendix are closely related (see on xxiv. 1), and may with comparative certainty be referred to the same source. That this source, though undoubtedly old, was the early document which has just given us the court and family history of David cannot for various reasons be entertained (see below). We propose therefore to group the contents of the appendix with the later additions to the book (e.g. 1 Sam. ii. 1–10) under the symbol Z, without implying that there is any connexion whatever between the very different sections thus indicated.

1. A three years' famine is attributed by a Divine oracle to the fact that Saul had violated the sanctity of a covenant between Israel and the Gibeonites, a crime of sacrilege which could only be expiated by the blood of the house of Saul. 'Few sections of the O.T. show more clearly the religious ideas of the time. We see how Yahweh as the avenger of a broken covenant requires from the children of the offender the blood that has been shed' (H. P. Smith).

It is for Saul and for his bloody house: read by dividing the text differently, 'upon Saul and upon his house (rests) blood,' i.e. as LXX explains, the guilt of blood (cf. Deut. xix. 10 and above xvi. 8). The original narrator gave no explanation of the crime referred to, nor was this required in his day, but a marginal note was appended later and now occupies the greater part of verse 2.

2. This treaty with Gibeon is now recorded in Joshua ix. Another hint of Saul's attempt to exterminate the members of the Gibeonite league has been found by some in an earlier chapter (iv. 2 f.), where perhaps the same annotator has left his mark.

atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the
4 LORD? And the Gibeonites said unto him, It is no
matter of silver or gold between us and Saul, or his
house; neither is it for us to put any man to death in
Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do
5 for you. And they said unto the king, The man that
consumed us, and that devised against us, *that* we should
be destroyed from remaining in any of the borders of
6 Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us,
and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of
Saul, the chosen of the LORD. And the king said, I
7 will give them. But the king spared Mephibosheth, the
son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD's
oath that was between them, between David and
8 Jonathan the son of Saul. But the king took the two
sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare

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3. the inheritance of the LORD: the people of Israel as xiv. 16, xx. 19; 1 Sam. x. 1; xxvi. 19, where see note.

4. The Gibeonites reply (1) that there can be no question of blood-money as compensation for the blood that Saul had shed (for the *wergild* among the early Hebrews, see Driver, *Deut.* 234); (2) that, as Amorites, they have no *locus standi* entitling them to execute blood-revenge against the Israelite house of Saul. Therefore, they hint, the king as the supreme justiciar must intervene. David understood the hint, and in verse 5 the Gibeonites formulate their demand.

6. we will hang them up unto the LORD: the precise form of execution denoted by the obscure verb of the original is unknown. It was certainly not death by strangulation as in xvii. 3. Probably some form of impalement is intended. See further on verse 9, also Gray on Num. xxv. 4 (Intern. Crit. Comm.) the only other occurrence of the word in question.

in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD: read, 'in Gibeon (LXX), in the hill of Yahweh,' the consonants of which greatly resemble those of the received text. The site of the execution was beside 'the great high place' (1 Kings iii. 4) of Gibeon.

7. If not a gloss (so Budde) this verse points to a different source for ch. xxi from that of ch. ix (C). Cf. on verse 12.

8. Rizpah has been already introduced iii. 7.

unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons
of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she bare to Adriel
the son of Barzillai the Meholathite: and he delivered 9
them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged
them in the mountain before the LORD, and they fell *all*
seven together: and they were put to death in the days
of harvest, in the first days, at the beginning of barley
harvest. And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sack- 10
cloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the
beginning of harvest until water was poured upon them
from heaven; and she suffered neither the birds of the
air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by
night. And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter 11
of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. And David 12
went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of
Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which
had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the
Philistines had hanged them, in the day that the
Philistines slew Saul in Gilboa: and he brought up from 13

Michal: a slip for 'Merab' (so Lucian and the Syriac version), see on 1 Sam. xviii. 19.

9. they fell all **seven together:** in the sense of 'they perished' with the implication, as always, of a violent death (*BDB.*, *Heb. Lex.* 657^a). W. R. Smith, taking the words in a literal sense, has suggested that the seven were hurled from a precipice (*Rel. Sem.*^{2}, 419), but for this a different expression from that in verse 6 is used in 2 Chron. xxv. 12. The time of year was about the latter half of April, so that for six weary months Rizpah watched by her dead until the October rains began to fall, showing that Yahweh had accepted the expiation and was once more gracious to His land (verse 14). By her devotion, which artist and poet have vied in commemorating, she was able to obtain burial for her sons, without which they would have been debarred from the life—such as it was—in Sheol.

12. from the street of Beth-shan: if this is not a variant tradition the expression is to be explained as on 1 Sam. xxxi. 12.

thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were
14 hanged. And they buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zela, in the sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land.

15 And the Philistines had war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought
16 against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear was three hundred *shekels* of brass in weight, he being girded with a new *sword*, thought to
17 have slain David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him.

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14. Zela, also Joshua viii. 28, has not been identified. The family burying-place was not in Gibeah.

(*b*) xxi. 15–22. *A series of exploits against the Philistines.*
This section is entirely of a piece with xxiii. 8 ff., from which it is now separated by the two poems that follow. Both sections may originally have stood in some connexion with the two brief accounts of David's early struggles with the Philistines, which now stand in v. 17–25.

15–17. David's narrow escape at Gob. His head quarters were still presumably at Hebron: see on v. 17.

and David waxed faint. And Ishbi-benob, &c.: the text shows deep-seated corruption (see Driver and H. P. Smith). The original may have run as follows: 'and David went down and his servants with him and dwelt in Gob (an unknown locality), and they fought with the Philistines. Then arose —— (a name no longer recoverable), who was of the sons of the giants,' &c.

16. the sons of the giant (Heb. 'the Raphah,' as margin): or 'of the giants,' taking the singular in a collective sense. For the Rephaim, the remains of a prehistoric population of abnormal stature, see the Bible dictionaries.

the weight of whose spear: read, 'of whose helmet' (so Klostermann, Budde) as 1 Sam. xvii. 5.

three hundred shekels of brass: about 13 lbs. avoir., see on 1 Sam. *loc. cit.* Delete **in weight,** a corruption of 'shekel.'

Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel.

And it came to pass after this, that there was again 18
war with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbecai the
Hushathite slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant.
And there was again war with the Philistines at Gob; 19
and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Beth-lehemite
slew Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like
a weaver's beam. And there was again war at Gath, 20
where was a man of great stature, that had on every hand

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18. Another exploit at **Gob,** for which the Chronicler has Gezer (1 Chron. xx. 4), the Greek and Syrian versions Gath.

Sibbecai the Hushathite: a member of a Beth-lehemite clan (1 Chron. iv. 4).

19. This verse has attracted much attention on account of the variant tradition which it contains regarding the slayer of Goliath. No unbiassed textual critic can escape the conclusion that the true reading here is: 'and Elhanan the son of Jair, the Beth-lehemite, slew Goliath the Gittite.' **Jaare-oregim,** 'woods of weavers,' is frankly nonsense; 'weavers' has come in from the line below, and 'Jaare' is of course a corruption of Jair who appears in the parallel passage 1 Chron. xx. 5. There we read that 'Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi [a corruption of Beth-*lehemi*te], the brother of Goliath the Gittite'—an evident endeavour to get rid of the discrepancy between our passage and the received text of 1 Sam. xvii (where see notes for the conjecture that there originally the Philistine giant was anonymous). An appeal to the historical critic, further, gives the result that a statement standing in a fragment of an early narrative—for though the section before us was inserted later into the Book of Samuel it contains ancient material—attributing a certain exploit to an obscure individual, is more likely to represent the actual facts of the case than a statement elsewhere describing the same exploit as the youthful adventure of the most popular hero of his time. (See Cheyne's detailed treatment in *Aids to the devout Study of Criticism*, 80 ff., 125 f.) The present writer's solution of the difficulty has been indicated above, and more fully in the notes on the earlier chapter.

a weaver's beam: see on 1 Sam. xvii. 7.

20 f. A fourth adventure, the scene of which was Gath. For the variant forms of the name **Shimei** see the margin. **Jonathan**

six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in
21 number; and he also was born to the giant. And when
he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimei David's
22 brother slew him. These four were born to the giant in
Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the
hand of his servants.

22 And David spake unto the LORD the words of this
song in the day that the LORD delivered him out of the
hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:
2 and he said,

The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my
 deliverer, even mine;
3 The God of my rock, in him will I trust;
My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high
 tower, and my refuge;
My saviour, thou savest me from violence.
4 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be
 praised:
So shall I be saved from mine enemies.

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is apparently the 'brother's son' whose wisdom is noted in 1 Chron. xxvii. 32 (R. V. marg.).

(*c*) xxii. *David's Thanksgiving Hymn.*

More favoured than the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 1 ff.), which we found to differ in no respect from a typical psalm, this great religious poem was received into the earliest of the three collections of 'sacred songs' which compose the Book of Psalms. There it now appears, with some unimportant variations, as Ps. xviii. Following the precedent of Driver, Smith, and Budde in their commentaries on Samuel, we propose to refer the student to the excellent notes by Professor Davison in his commentary on the Psalms in this series (the Century Bible). The present writer, however, does not feel able to go so far as this scholar in the direction of a 'probable Davidic authorship' (Ps. xcviii), holding that the Davidic element—if such there be—has now been so overlaid by the thoughts of a later poet or poets as to be no longer distinguishable from them. This being so, it remains doubtful whether it would not be more scientific frankly to assign the whole poem to a later age.

For the waves of death compassed me, 5
The floods of ungodliness made me afraid.
The cords of Sheol were round about me: 6
The snares of death came upon me.
In my distress I called upon the LORD, 7
Yea, I called unto my God:
And he heard my voice out of his temple,
And my cry *came* into his ears.
Then the earth shook and trembled, 8
The foundations of heaven moved
And were shaken, because he was wroth.
There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, 9
And fire out of his mouth devoured:
Coals were kindled by it.
He bowed the heavens also, and came down; 10
And thick darkness was under his feet.
And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: 11
Yea, he was seen upon the wings of the wind.
And he made darkness pavilions round about him, 12
Gathering of waters, thick clouds of the skies.
At the brightness before him 13
Coals of fire were kindled.
The LORD thundered from heaven, 14
And the Most High uttered his voice.
And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; 15
Lightning, and discomfited them.
Then the channels of the sea appeared, 16
The foundations of the world were laid bare,
By the rebuke of the LORD,
At the blast of the breath of his nostrils.
He sent from on high, he took me; 17
He drew me out of many waters;
He delivered me from my strong enemy, 18

From them that hated me; for they were too mighty for me.
19 They came upon me in the day of my calamity:
But the LORD was my stay.
20 He brought me forth also into a large place:
He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness:
According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.
22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
23 For all his judgements were before me:
And as for his statutes, I did not depart from them.
24 I was also perfect toward him,
And I kept myself from mine iniquity.
25 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness;
According to my cleanness in his eyesight.
26 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful,
With the perfect man thou wilt shew thyself perfect;
27 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure;
And with the perverse thou wilt shew thyself froward.
28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save:
But thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down.
29 For thou art my lamp, O LORD:
And the LORD will lighten my darkness.
30 For by thee I run upon a troop:
By my God do I leap over a wall.
31 As for God, his way is perfect:
The word of the LORD is tried;
He is a shield unto all them that trust in him.

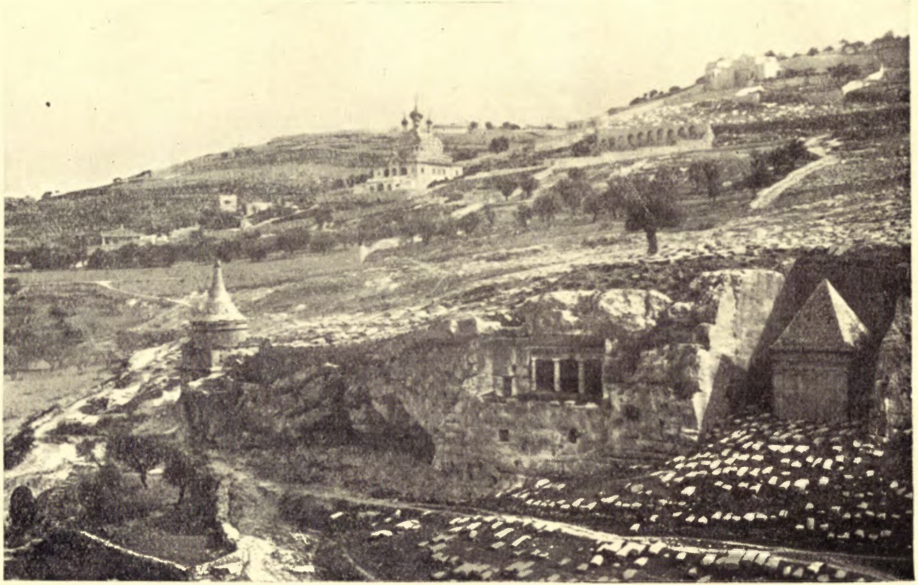

Photo: Photochrom Co.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

For who is God, save the LORD? 32
And who is a rock, save our God?
God is my strong fortress: 33
And he guideth the perfect in his way.
He maketh his feet like hinds' *feet*: 34
And setteth me upon my high places.
He teacheth my hands to war; 35
So that mine arms do bend a bow of brass.
Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: 36
And thy gentleness hath made me great.
Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, 37
And my feet have not slipped.
I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; 38
Neither did I turn again till they were consumed
And I have consumed them, and smitten them 39
through, that they cannot arise:
Yea, they are fallen under my feet.
For thou hast girded me with strength unto the 40
battle:
Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up
against me.
Thou hast also made mine enemies turn their backs 41
unto me,
That I might cut off them that hate me.
They looked, but there was none to save; 42
Even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.
Then did I beat them small as the dust of the earth, 43
I did stamp them as the mire of the streets, and did
spread them abroad.
Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of 44
my people;
Thou hast kept me to be the head of the nations:
A people whom I have not known shall serve me.

45 The strangers shall submit themselves unto me:
As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me.
46 The strangers shall fade away,
And shall come trembling out of their close places.
47 The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock;
And exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation:
48 Even the God that executeth vengeance for me,
And bringeth down peoples under me,
49 And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies:
Yea, thou liftest me up above them that rise up against me:
Thou deliverest me from the violent man.
50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the nations,
And will sing praises unto thy name.
51 Great deliverance giveth he to his king:
And sheweth lovingkindness to his anointed,
To David and to his seed, for evermore.

23 Now these be the last words of David.

(*d*) xxiii. 1–7. *David's 'Last Words.'*

The second of the poetical insertions in this appendix is of the nature of a testament, such as Hebrew poets, down to the fall of the Jewish state, loved to put into the mouth of the dying heroes of the past. The so-called blessings of Jacob (Gen. xlix) and Moses (Deut. xxxiii) at once suggest themselves as models from the earlier, the 'Testaments' of the Twelve Patriarchs as illustrations from the later, period of Hebrew literature. Of Davidic authorship there can be no question in this case. The text has suffered greatly in transmission, especially towards the end. The Versions give little help, since 'they differ extraordinarily in their understanding of the Psalm, and their apprehension is usually misapprehension' (H. P. Smith). The first two stanzas or quatrains are of an introductory character.

1. Now these . . . David: an introduction in prose by the editor who inserted the poem, which begins:

Oracle of David the son of Jesse,
Oracle of the man set on high.

David the son of Jesse saith,
And the man who was raised on high saith,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel:
The spirit of the LORD spake by me, 2
And his word was upon my tongue.
The God of Israel said, 3
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God,
He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, 4
A morning without clouds;
When the tender grass *springeth* out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain.

For similar openings see Num. xxiv. 3, 15, two 'oracles' of Balaam, and Prov. xxxi. The second distich expands the thought conveyed by 'set on high.' David has been greatly honoured both by God and man, for he is

> The anointed of Jacob's God,
> The darling of Israel's songs.

the sweet psalmist of Israel: a rendering open to grave suspicion (see, however, BDB., *Heb. Lex.* 654 [a]). There seems no reason for departing from the usual connotation of the crucial word in the line (note R.V. marg.), which in i. 23 and Cant. i. 16 is used as a synonym of 'beloved'—the 'beloved' or 'the darling of the songs (or melodies) of Israel'—a rendering altogether more suitable to the parallelism.

2, 3 [a]. A second quatrain in which David is represented as claiming the inspiration of a prophet as the mouthpiece of Yahweh (cf. Exod. iv. 16, vii. 1).

3 [b], 4. A five-line stanza giving the kernel of the oracle in praise of the ideal ruler.

4. Render:

> Like the morning light shall he rise,
> (Like) the sun of a cloudless morn,
> Making the grass to spring (?) from the earth (after rain ?).

The rendering of the last line, which in the original has a word

5 Verily my house is not so with God;
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all things, and sure:
For it is all my salvation, and all *my* desire,
Although he maketh it not to grow.
6 But the ungodly shall be all of them as thorns to be
thrust away,
For they cannot be taken with the hand:
7 But the man that toucheth them
Must be armed with iron and the staff of a spear;
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their*
place.

8 These be the names of the mighty men whom David

---

too many for the metre, is quite uncertain. For the probable thought see Ps. lxxii. 6, where the ideal ruler is compared to 'showers that water the earth.'

5. A quatrain in which David recalls the Divine promise of the permanence of his dynasty (vii. 11 ff., 16). The margin shows the straits to which the Revisers were reduced with the traditional text, the first and fourth lines, in particular, being no longer intelligible in their present form. The first should probably read: 'Established is my house with God' (Nestle), for which see vii. 16, 26. For the fourth line we may adopt Smith's conjecture: 'For all my delight is in him.' The closing words of the received text will then belong to the following stanza as in codex B of the LXX.

6 f. Here the original becomes still more corrupt. The student is referred to Driver's *Notes*, and the larger commentaries for more or less plausible emendations.

(*e*) xxiii. 8-39. *The members of David's two orders of knighthood.* The remainder of this chapter is occupied with a list of the members of two orders *pour le mérite*, the order of the Three, and the order of the Thirty. The honour of admission to these orders, especially to the order of the Three, seems, like our own Victoria Cross, to have been gained by conspicuous bravery in the face of the enemy. Owing to the similarity of the Hebrew words for 'three' and 'thirty,' and to the ignorance of copyists as to the true significance of the lists, these are now in some confusion, and the names both of persons and of places are frequently corrupt. The list as a whole is repeated in 1 Chron. xi. 11-41,

had: Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite, against eight hundred slain at one time. And after him was Eleazar 9
the son of Dodai the son of an Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: he arose, and smote the 10
Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to

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and in part in 1 Chron. xxvii. 2–15 (see Driver's arrangement in parallel columns, *Notes* 278 f.).

xxiii. 8–12. *The Order of the Three.*

To this, the higher order, belonged Ish-baal, the 'chief of the Three,' Eleazar and Shammah. Joab is conspicuous by his absence.

8. Josheb-basshebeth a Tahchemonite: these names are not 'probably,' as the margin has it, but most certainly corrupt. The first is a disfigured form of Ish-bosheth (so the LXX), itself a disguise for Ish-baal (see on ii. 8); the second should be read 'the Hachmonite' (cf. 1 Chron. xi. 11, xxvii. 32).

chief of the captains: the last word is very uncertain. Lucian read 'chief of the Three,' which gives an excellent sense. In other words, Ish-baal was the commander of the order.

the same was Adino the Eznite: a curious corruption either of 'he lifted up,' or rather 'he wielded his spear,' as in the parallel text of Chronicles (cf. verse 18 below), or of 'he wielded his axe (Marquardt, Budde, which is nearer the received text) against eight hundred,' &c. This remarkable feat of arms procured Ish-baal his admission into the order.

9. The second member of the Three was **Eleazar, the son of Dodai** (or Dodo, see on 1 Sam. xvi. 13) the **Ahohite**—so read with Chronicles.

with David when they defied, &c.: read, with Chron., 'he was with David at Pas-dammim, when the Philistines were gathered together there to battle.' The place is called Ephes-dammim in 1 Sam. xvii. 17. The last clause belongs to the next verse.

10. Read: 'And when the men of Israel . . . he arose,' &c. H. P. Smith cites, from Doughty's *Arabia Deserta,* ii. 28, an interesting modern parallel to this feat.

11 spoil. And after him was Shammah the son of Agee
a Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together
into a troop, where was a plot of ground full of lentils;
12 and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood
in the midst of the plot, and defended it, and slew the
13 Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory. And
three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David
in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam; and the
troop of the Philistines were encamped in the valley
14 of Rephaim. And David was then in the hold, and the
15 garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem. And
David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me
water to drink of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the
16 gate! And the three mighty men brake through the

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11. The third member was **Shammah the son of Agee,** the scene of whose adventure was 'at Lehi' (Judges xv. 9)—so read for **into a troop.**

xxiii. 13–17a. *An act of devotion of three of the Thirty to David.* The famous episode of the water from the well of Beth-lehem, loosely connected with what precedes and follows, owes its place here apparently to the opinion of an editor that the three paladins of the well were the three heroes above commemorated. Its proper place is after the Thirty have been enumerated.

13. The word 'chief' is wanting in the best texts of LXX, and is unnecessary. **In the harvest time** is an attempt to render two words of which the first is 'unto' and the second something which the Chronicler read as 'the rock.' For **unto the cave** read 'to the hold,' or fortress of Adullam (see on 1 Sam. xxii. 1, and 2 Sam. v. 18).

15 ff. The adventure that follows has in all ages appealed to the generous instincts of humanity. David longs for a draught from the well of his boyhood! Through the Philistine army encamped in the valley of Rephaim (see on v. 18) the three heroes cut their way into the town of Beth-lehem, and having drawn the water return as they went. But the self-sacrifice of 'the dauntless three,' who took their life in their hand for love of their king, had in his eyes changed the water into blood. As blood it belonged to God, and so was poured out as an offering to the King of kings.

host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well
of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and
brought it to David: but he would not drink thereof,
but poured it out unto the LORD. And he said, Be 17
it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: *shall I
drink* the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of
their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These
things did the three mighty men. And Abishai, the 18
brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of the
three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred
and slew them, and had a name among the three. Was 19
he not most honourable of the three? therefore he was
made their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the
first three. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son 20
of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds,

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17. The last sentence is rather the conclusion of the narrative of the achievements of the three in verses 8–12, another indication that 13–17^a has got displaced.

xxiii. 18–23. *The achievements of Abishai and Benaiah.*

Between the story of the Three and the list of the Thirty of whom no special deeds of heroism are recorded the author inserts an eulogium of Abishai, the chief or commander of the order of the Thirty, and of Benaiah the most distinguished ordinary member of that body.

18. chief of the three: read, 'chief of the Thirty,' with the Syriac and all moderns. Abishai's achievement was considerably below that of the real chief of the Three (verse 8).

and had a name among the three: the author cannot have thus contradicted himself (see verse 19 end). We should read, with Smith and Budde, 'so he gat himself a name like that of the three.'

19. Read: 'behold, he was more honourable than the Thirty (so 1 Chron. xi. 25 R. V.), and became their captain, but unto the Three did he not attain.'

20. The text of the description of Benaiah is very uncertain. Read, perhaps, 'a man of valour, and a man of many achievements, a native of Kabzeel.' This last was a southern town on the border of Edom (Josh. xv. 21).

he slew the two *sons of* Ariel of Moab: he went down
also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow:
21 and he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egypt-
ian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him
with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's
22 hand, and slew him with his own spear. These things
did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had a name
23 among the three mighty men. He was more honourable
than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three.
And David set him over his guard.

24 Asahel the brother of Joab was one of the thirty;

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he slew the two sons of **Ariel of Moab:** the Revisers have adopted the Greek text, the Hebrew lacking the word for 'sons of' (cf. A.V. 'two lion-like men of Moab'). Of the various attempts to recover the original form of the sentence, Klostermann's has at least the merit of simplicity. Starting from the Greek text, as above, he obtains by a slight emendation: 'he slew the two young lions (*lit.* sons of the lion) in their lair, after he had gone down and slain the lion (himself) in the midst of a pit,' &c. The mention of the **time of snow** suggests the means by which the lions were tracked.

21. a goodly man: read, a man of great stature,' with the Chronicler (1 Chron. xi. 23), who adds the popular comparison of the Egyptian's spear to 'a weaver's beam' (see 1 Sam. xvii. 7, 2 Sam. xxi. 19).

22 f. This eulogy of Benaiah has to be emended as in verses 18 f. It has been suggested that these two heroes, Abishai and Benaiah, were in modern phrase gazetted for promotion to the order of the Three when a vacancy should occur.

23. over his guard: the royal bodyguard, composed of the foreign mercenaries, the Cherethites and the Pelethites (viii. 18, xx. 23).

xxiii. 24-39. *The members of the Order of the Thirty.*

The fact that the first on the list is the youngest of the three sons of Zeruiah, who was slain by Abner (ii. 18 ff.) while David was still in Hebron, shows that these orders were instituted very early in David's reign. It also suggests that the vacancies were filled up from time to time by other candidates, which is probably the explanation of the fact that considerably over thirty names are given in the list that follows. Few of these knights are mentioned elsewhere.

Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem; Shammah the 25
Harodite, Elika the Harodite; Helez the Paltite, Ira the 26
son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; Abiezer the Anathothite, 27
Mebunnai the Hushathite; Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai 28
the Netophathite; Heleb the son of Baanah the Neto- 29
phathite, Ittai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the children
of Benjamin; Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai of the 30
brooks of Gaash; Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth 31
the Barhumite; Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of 32
Jashen, Jonathan; Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the 33
son of Sharar the Ararite; Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, 34
the son of the Maacathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel
the Gilonite; Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite; 35
Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite; 36
Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armour- 37
bearers to Joab the son of Zeruiah; Ira the Ithrite, 38
Gareb the Ithrite; Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven 39
in all.

And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against **24**

(*f*) xxiv. *David's census and its consequences.*

The last entry in the appendix to Samuel consists of a document which may be described as the charter of the most famous of the world's holy places. By the theophany here recorded the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite received a consecration which has made it holy ground not only for Judaism and Christianity, but for Islam as well. Upon this spot, we can scarcely doubt, stood the great altar of Solomon's temple. To-day, as all the world knows, the site is covered by the magnificent mosque, the *Ḳubbet eṣ-ṣaḥra*, or Dome of the Rock, the most sacred of Mohammedan shrines after those of Mecca and Medina. In contents and style the narrative before us shows a marked affinity with that of chap. xxi. Both tell the tale of man's trespass and the judgement that followed, and how the anger of the Deity was finally appeased, and 'God was intreated for the land' (xxi. 14, xxiv. 25). The incidents of both are probably to be referred to the beginning of David's reign over all Israel. This chapter has been carefully edited by the Chronicler in his characteristic manner. Indeed, the variations are so numerous that Budde is of

Israel, and he moved David against them, saying, Go,
2 number Israel and Judah. And the king said to Joab
the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now to
and fro through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even
to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may
3 know the sum of the people. And Joab said unto the
king, Now the Lord thy God add unto the people, how
many soever they be, an hundredfold, and may the eyes
of my lord the king see it: but why doth my lord the
4 king delight in this thing? Notwithstanding the king's
word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains

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opinion that the narrative in Chronicles (1 Chron. xxi) may rest on a different recension of the text from that to which we now proceed.

1. The opening words, **And again,** are best taken as referring to the incidents of xxi. 1–14, of which this chapter is probably the continuation.

and he moved David against them: namely, Israel (for the verb in a similar connexion see 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, R.V., 'stirred up'). The conception of the Deity in the author's mind seems a reflection of the idea, not yet obsolete, of an oriental ruler to whose absolutism there are no bounds. Yahweh is incensed against Israel—it is not for His subjects to ask the why or the wherefore—and David is made the instrument of His anger. Of surpassing interest for the study of the progressiveness of revelation in the O. T. period is the form which the Chronicler has given to this verse. To his more developed religious sense the idea was abhorrent that God could be subject to moods, and incite men to a course of action for which He afterwards calls them to account. Accordingly he writes: 'And *Satan* stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel' (1 Chron. xxi. 1). Wherein the sinfulness of the numbering consisted our narrator does not say. Probably in the popular thought of the time it was regarded as a sinful ambition on the part of the creature to possess a secret which the Creator intended should be His alone.

2. Joab the captain of the host: read, as required by verse 4, 'Joab and the captains of the host who were with him.' The object of the census, we may gather from this, was the preparation of a register of all the males capable of bearing arms (cf. verse 9).

of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host
went out from the presence of the king, to number the
people of Israel. And they passed over Jordan, and 5
pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is
in the middle of the valley of Gad, and unto Jazer:
then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim- 6
hodshi; and they came to Dan-jaan, and round about to
Zidon, and came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all 7
the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and
they went out to the south of Judah, at Beer-sheba.
So when they had gone to and fro through all the land, 8
they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and
twenty days. And Joab gave up the sum of the number- 9
ing of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel
eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword;

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5. and pitched in Aroer: read with LXX (L): 'and they began from Aroer, and from the city which is in the midst of the valley (wady) towards the Gadites, and on to Jazer,' the first part *verbatim* as in Deut. ii. 36. Aroer, the modern *Arâir*, lay on the north bank of the Arnon, now the *Wadi Mojib*, which formed the southern boundary of Israelitish territory on the east of the Jordan.

Jazer was the frontier town towards Ammon (Num. xxi. 24, LXX). The enumerators thus began work at the extreme south, and worked their way northwards to the Jabbok.

6. Then followed the district of **Gilead,** between the Jabbok and the Yarmuk.

and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi: an evident corruption for which we must either substitute Lucian's text, 'to the land of the Hittites towards Kadesh,' the Hittite capital on the left bank of the Orontes, or adopt one or other of the more recent conjectures, for which see *EBi.* iv. col. 4888 f.

Dan-jaan: read either, 'and they came to Dan (the modern *Tel-el-Ḳādi* at the base of Hermon), and from Dan they went round towards Zidon' (Wellh., Driver), or 'they came to Dan and Ijon (see 1 Kings xv. 20), and went round,' &c. (Klost., Budde). The enumerators now proceed to take a census of Western Palestine from Dan in the north to Beer-sheba, the modern *Bir-es-Seba*, in the south.

9. The numbers, as usual, have not been consistently handed down (cf. Chron. and Lucian), and may safely be regarded, even and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

10 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: but now, O LORD, put away, I beseech thee, the iniquity of thy
11 servant; for I have done very foolishly. And when David rose up in the morning, the word of the LORD
12 came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and speak unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may
13 do it unto thee. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thy foes while they pursue thee? or shall there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise thee, and consider what answer I shall return to him that sent
14 me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of
15 man. So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from

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at the lowest figure in any of the texts, as considerably exaggerated.

10. After the census had been concluded, David, conscience-stricken, makes humble confession of his sin.

11. The prophet **Gad** has been already introduced, 1 Sam. xxii. 5.

12. I offer thee: literally and more graphically, 'I hold over thee' (cf. R. V. marg.).

13. seven years: read with the Chronicler, 'three years,' which makes the duration of the offered judgements three years, three months, and three days respectively.

14. David chooses the plague—'the sword of Yahweh,' as it is termed in 1 Chron. xxi. 12—for God is more merciful than man.

15. The Greek text is here preferred by recent scholars: 'So David chose the pestilence; and it was the days of the wheat harvest when the pestilence began among the people, and there

the morning even to the time appointed: and there died
of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy
thousand men. And when the angel stretched out his 16
hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented
him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the
people, It is enough; now stay thine hand. And the
angel of the LORD was by the threshing-floor of Araunah
the Jebusite. And David spake unto the LORD when 17
he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo,
I have sinned, and I have done perversely: but these
sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray
thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, 18
Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshing-floor
of Araunah the Jebusite. And David went up 19
according to the saying of Gad, as the LORD commanded.
And Araunah looked forth, and saw the king and his 20
servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out,
and bowed himself before the king with his face to the

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died,' &c. 'The circumstantiality and force' of this form of the narrative—seventy thousand victims though the plague had only just begun—'constitute a presumption in favour of its originality, as against the more colourless and ordinary narrative of the Hebrew text' (Driver, *Notes*, in loc.).

16. Reading this as the sequel of the emended text in the preceding verse, we have a striking justification of David's confidence in the Divine mercy (verse 14), for the plague, as we have seen, had but begun when Yahweh stayed the hand of the destroying angel. Jerusalem, in particular, was still spared.

Araunah: in Chron. Ornan, in LXX, Ornah (see R. V. marg.), one of the original Jebusite inhabitants of the city.

17. Compare the more circumstantial account, 1 Chron. xxi. 16.

18 ff. The spot where the angel's hand was stayed is to be consecrated for all future ages by the erection of an altar to Yahweh.

20. The Chronicler adds the information that 'Araunah was threshing wheat,' cf. the restored text of verse 15.

21 ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the
king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the
threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD,
22 that the plague may be stayed from the people. And
Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take
and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, the
oxen for the burnt offering, and the threshing instruments
23 and the furniture of the oxen for the wood: all this, O
king, doth Araunah give unto the king. And Araunah
said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.
24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will verily
buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God which cost me nothing.
So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for
25 fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar

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22 f. Araunah asserts that there is no need for David to *buy* the threshing-floor, everything is at his sovereign's disposal for the contemplated sacrifice; but see on verse 23.

the threshing instruments and the furniture of the oxen: the former are the wooden sledges still in use in Syria. They are driven over the corn, the ears of which are stripped from the stalk by the sharp flints with which the under surface of the sledge is set (see illustration *EBi.* i. col. 83). The **furniture** consisted of the wooden yokes by which the oxen were harnessed to the sledges (1 Kings xix. 21). Cf. the proceedings 1 Sam. vi. 14.

23. Read: 'the whole doth the servant of my lord the king give unto the king' (see Driver, *Notes*). This offer must not be taken seriously. Like the similar offer of Ephron the Hittite (Gen. xxiii. 11), it is merely a part of the conventional courtesy which still regulates buying and selling in the Nearer East.

24. The fine thought to which David here gives utterance underlies all true sacrifice. In the older Hebrew religion this principle may have had its limitations (cf. Mic. vi. 6 ff.), in the religion and ethics of Christianity it has none.

fifty shekels of silver: under £7 sterling, valued as bullion, but of course of immensely greater purchasing power. The price is small compared with that paid for the cave of Machpelah (400 shekels, Gen xxiii. 16). The Chronicler raises the price to unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

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600 shekels of gold, *circa* £1200. For the values see the writer's article 'Money' in Hastings' *DB.* iii. 420.

25. That the site of David's altar corresponded with that of Solomon's altar of burnt-offering, and that both are now occupied by the Dome of the Rock, are points on which there is a general agreement among scholars (see Skinner's *Kings* in this series, Appendix, note I).

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25. That the site of David's altar corresponded with that of Solomon's altar of burnt-offering, and that both are now occupied by the Dome of the Rock, are points on which there is a general agreement among scholars (see Skinner's *Kings* in this series, Appendix, note I).

APPENDIX

NOTE A. THE ARK IN THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL[1]

THE importance of the Ark in the religious history of the Hebrews, and the prominent place which it occupies in the earliest sources of Samuel, demand a slightly more extended study of this unique object of the Hebrew cultus than was possible in the notes. The term 'Ark,' from the Latin *arca,* a chest, is the rendering (since Wiclif, 1380) suggested by the Vulgate of the Hebrew *'ārōn*, a chest, as the word is rendered 2 Kings xii. 10 f. Either alone or in the combination 'Ark of the Covenant,' to be presently explained, the Ark has become the usual designation among us of the sacred chest in which were deposited, according to the *latest* form of the ecclesiastical tradition, 'a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant' (Heb. ix. 4). It is instructive, however, to note the different names or titles of the Ark in the different strata of Hebrew literature.

(*a*) *The Titles of the Ark in the O. T.* In the O. T. the Ark is mentioned close on 200 times, and by at least twenty-two different designations. But if the simplest name of all 'the Ark' (fifty-four times) is set aside as scarcely a title, these many designations are found to fall into three groups. (1) In our oldest extant sources, which are precisely those of Samuel (**A**, **M**, and **C**), followed by the prophetic source **JE** of the Hexateuch[2], we find 'the Ark of Yahweh—by every token the earliest designation of all—alternating with 'the Ark of God,' which, however, appears in several instances to have been substituted for the other. (2) In Deuteronomy and the writings of the Deuteronomic school (see pp. 10 ff.) the favourite designation of the decalogue is the *bĕrîth*, in our versions rendered covenant, but in this connexion properly 'law' or even 'decalogue,' as is evident from Deut. ix.

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[1] This Note may be regarded as supplementing, and to some extent correcting, the writer's article 'Ark' in Hastings' *DB*. vol. i, to which the reader is referred for points not touched upon here.

[2] It is remarkable that in the Pentateuch the Ark is mentioned in this source *only three times,* namely, Num. x. 33, 35 f., xiv. 44, and afterwards in the early chapters of Joshua (iii, iv and vi).

9, 11, 15, 'the tables of the *bĕrîth*' or decalogue, which Moses placed in the Ark (x. 5). From this circumstance the Ark bears, in Deuteronomic writers, the title 'Ark of the *bĕrîth*' (R. V. covenant), that is, 'the chest containing the decalogue.' The *seventh century* author of Deuteronomy, it should be noted, is the first in our extant literature to associate the Ark with the tables of the law, or *even with contents of any sort* (see below). The last-cited title, however, although so familiar to us as 'the Ark of the covenant,' occurs but a few times, and that exclusively in the Deuteronomistic parts of Joshua. The more usual form is 'the Ark of the law (*bĕrîth*) of Yahweh,' rarely varied by 'the Ark of the law of God.' In some half-dozen passages of pre-Deuteronomic writings it is evident on grammatical and other grounds that the word *bĕrîth* has been inserted in one or other of the older titles (so in Joshua iii. 11, 14, 17; 1 Sam iv. 3, 4, 5). (3) In the Priests' Code (P), and here only, is found the designation 'the Ark of the testimony' (thirteen times), again equivalent to 'the chest containing the decalogue,' P's favourite term for which is 'the testimony.'

Turning now to the Books of Samuel, we find the Ark mentioned no fewer than sixty-one times[1], under seven separate designations, viz. 'the Ark of God' (twenty-four), 'the Ark of Yahweh' (twenty), for which is substituted in the mouth of the Philistines 'the Ark of the God of Israel' (seven times, 1 Sam. v. 7 ff., vi. 3), 'the Ark' simply, four times. In four other passages we have the composite forms 'the Ark [of the covenant] of Yahweh,' or 'of God' (iv. 3, 4, 5[2]; xv. 24, a gloss). The two references that remain (1 Sam. iv. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 2, see note on the latter) show greatly expanded titles, the most distinctive parts of which contain the formula 'the LORD of hosts, which sitteth upon the cherubim.' As regards the first part, the Divine name, Yahweh Ṣebaoth, has already been explained (p. 37) as denoting Yahweh as 'the God of the armies (or hosts) of Israel' (1 Sam. xvii. 45). The qualifying epithet unites two streams of influence, the one the primitive conception of the cherubim as the storm-clouds, the visible manifestation in nature of Yahweh (2 Sam. xxii. 11), the other the later conception of the cherubim as the guardians of the Ark, in the temple of Solomon. In the cases before us, therefore, the phrase

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[1] Of these the two occurrences, 1 Sam. xiv. 18, should be deleted as glosses (see the notes), also the post-redactional gloss, 2 Sam. xv. 24. On the other hand, an original mention in 2 Sam. xii. 12 should be restored (see note).

[2] These, it will be observed, are the *first three* references out of twenty-seven in the document **A**, but even in these the LXX has preserved the older and original forms.

'that sits enthroned upon the cherubim' is a late expansion of the original titles, suggesting the Ark as the earthly throne of Yahweh (cf. Davison's *Psalms* (*Cent. Bible*), i. 361 f.).

(*b*) *The special significance of the Ark in Samuel.* In almost every reference in the oldest pre-Deuteronomic sources, above specified, to the Ark—which must be thought of as a simple chest, very different from the gold-covered shrine of the Priests' Code (Exod. xxv. 10 ff.) with its mercy-seat and over-arching cherubim —*it is associated with war and the national militia of Israel* (Num. xiv. 42 ff.; Joshua vi. 6 ff.; 1 Sam. iv. 3 ff.; 2 Sam. xi. 11, xii. 12, emended text). Its presence with the host on the battlefield is the guarantee of victory (1 Sam. iv. 3), its absence the cause of defeat, as at Eben-ezer, and as on an earlier occasion at Hormah (Num. xiv. 44 f.). War was a religious exercise, begun with sacrifices and prayer; the warriors were 'the consecrated ones' (see on 1 Sam. xiii. 9); the battles of His people were Yahweh's battles (xviii. 17), and Yahweh Himself bears the name of Yahweh Ṣebaoth, 'the God of the armies of Israel' (xvii. 45).

The earliest of all the extant references to the Ark connects it with the fact of war. In the ancient poetical fragment, Num. x. 35 f., which may well have been taken from the collection entitled 'the book of the wars of Yahweh' (Num. xxi. 14), is preserved the prayer with which the Ark was sent forth to battle:

'Arise, O Yahweh, and let thine enemies be scattered,
Let them that hate thee flee before thee.'

Also that with which its return was welcomed:

'Return, O Yahweh, unto the myriad clans of Israel.'

In these, it will be noted, *the Ark is addressed directly as Yahweh.* The same identification of the Ark with Yahweh meets us in the early source A of Samuel. 'Let us fetch the Ark of Yahweh,' is the resolution of the Hebrew sheikhs after the defeat at Eben-ezer, 'that He (not 'it' as in R. V.) may come unto us and save us' (1 Sam. iv. 3; cf. the Philistines' comment in verses 7 f.). Its capture is described in the striking words, 'the Glory has departed (lit. 'has gone into captivity') from Israel' (verse 21 f.); where 'the Glory' is a synonym for Yahweh. This identification is so complete that, on the return of the Ark, the men of Beth-shemesh exclaim, 'who is able to stand before this holy God' (vi. 20). At a later time David played and danced, even as he sacrificed, 'before Yahweh,' inasmuch as these acts were done before the Ark (2 Sam. vi. 5 ff.; cf. Joshua vii. 6 ff.).

In all these early passages, then, it is clear that the Ark is identified with the presence of Yahweh. It is not, as is generally held, a mere symbol of that presence. This must not be understood in a crass, material sense, as if the Ark were a fetish, or contained one or more fetishes in the shape of meteoric stones or stones from the original abode of Yahweh on Horeb, as is the almost universal opinion of German scholars, of Cheyne in this country (*EBi.* i. 307), and Moore in America (*EBi.* ii. 2155). The key to the problem is to be sought elsewhere[1].

In the tangled skein of traditions respecting the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel and the guides provided for them through the desert, now found in scattered fragments of our Pentateuch sources, we find, in addition to Jethro (Num. x. 29 ff., compared with Judges i. 16) and the Ark (Num. x. 33), mention made of 'the angel of Yahweh' (Exod. xxiii. 20 ff.), the pillar of cloud and of fire (*passim*), and finally the mysterious 'Face' or 'Presence (*pānîm*) of Yahweh' (Exod. xxxiii. 6 f.)[2]. Now these three last-mentioned are, in the conception of the writers, varying degrees of the personal manifestation of Yahweh to His people. In the angel this 'temporary descent to visibility' on the part of Yahweh assumes human form, the cloud is the visible representation of the 'Glory of Yahweh' (for which see Kautzsch in Hastings' *DB.*, extra vol. 639 f.), while *the ark is the supreme embodiment of the 'Presence of Yahweh.'* Thus when Moses expresses himself as dissatisfied with the promise of the 'angel of Yahweh' to go before the tribes on their march to Canaan (Exod. xxxii. 34, xxxiii. 2), he obtains the further promise of what is evidently a fuller manifestation in the shape of 'the Presence,' which is even identified with Yahweh. 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest' (xxxiii. 14 f.). This fundamental passage is the original both of Deut. iv. 37, 'he brought them out by his presence,' and of Isa. lxiii. 9, which must be read: 'neither a messenger nor an angel, but his presence delivered them.'

Had we only the good fortune to have access to one or other of the prophetic sources, **J** and **E**, we are convinced that the Ark would have been explicitly brought into connexion with the mysterious *pānîm*, the Face, or Presence, of Yahweh. Higher than the temporary visibility of the angel, and than the more lasting but still transitory 'glory' of the cloud, the Ark remained as a permanent possession, at once the highest embodiment of Yahweh's presence and the substitute for that still more complete presence of Yahweh in person, which no man could see and live (xxxiii. 20).

We are here in a region of primitive conceptions where it is difficult for us moderns to feel at home. But the expression of Yahweh's 'face' or 'presence,' as a synonym for Yahweh's 'self,' had its origin in Hebrew usage, by which the person of royalty was described as the king's 'face,' or 'presence,' a usage indeed not unknown among ourselves. Thus, to take an illustration from the Book of Samuel, Hushai urges the advantage to Absalom's army of 'thy Presence (='your Majesty') marching in the midst of them' (2 Sam. xvii. 11; cf. R. V. marg. and the notes). Similarly Absalom a few years earlier 'saw not the king's face' (xiv. 24, 28), i. e. he was not admitted to 'the royal presence.' The writer hopes elsewhere to show that even in the earlier parts of the O. T. the Ark originally was explicitly identified with the 'Presence' of Yahweh. The further discussion of the question here would require citation of the Hebrew texts, and is therefore unsuitable for this already too extended note.

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[1] When the writer first expounded the following explanation in public (1903), a subsequent speaker remarked that 'the Ark had been at once emptied and glorified'!

[2] For this difficult *theologoumenon*, see now Kautzsch in Hastings' *DB.*, extra vol. 639; Lagrange, *Rev. Biblique*, 1903, 215 ff.

(*c*) *The stay of the Ark at Kiriath-jearim* (cf. pp. 217 f. above). Another problem of great difficulty, raised by the fortunes of the Ark in Samuel, is the unaccountable neglect of this guarantee of the 'presence of Yahweh' during the period covered by the narrative from 1 Sam. vii to 2 Sam. vi. This neglect has been described with truth as 'one of the most singular circumstances of a singular age' (*Oxf. Hexateuch*, i. 81). The merit of having first recognized and grappled with the problem belongs to the late Professor Kosters of Leiden, who propounded the view that the account of the voluntary restitution of the Ark by the Philistines, now given in 1 Sam. vi, is unhistorical (*Theol. Tijdschrift*, 1893, 361 ff.). The Ark, according to Kosters, remained in the safe custody of the Philistines at Gath in the house of Obed-edom until forcibly retaken by David in the course of his Philistine campaigns, to which a brief allusion is made in 2 Sam. xxi. 20 ff. David took the precious relic first to Kiriath-jearim pending the preparation of proper quarters in Jerusalem, or even the capture of the fortress itself.

The antiquity and general credibility of the early source **A** is fatal to Koster's theory. But some explanation of the long continued inaccessibility of the Ark is urgently required. The following is put forward as a probable theory, developing a suggestion by Karl Budde, to account for the facts as known to us from the present fragmentary record. During the period in question Kiriath-jearim, which we know to have been a member of the Gibeonite league (Joshua ix. 17), and therefore a predominantly Amorite or Canaanite city, was under Philistine suzerainty, although not situated in Philistine territory. The Philistines, it is true, sent the dangerous representative of the God of Israel (vi. 3) forth from the confines of Philistia, but it still remained within the sphere of their political jurisdiction, and so was inaccessible to the Hebrew authorities. It may even be conjectured that Saul's mysterious 'zeal' against the Gibeonites and other members of the league (cf. 2 Sam. xxi. 2, with note on iv. 2 f.) was not unconnected with an attempt on his part to recover the ancient palladium of the Hebrew tribes. At Kiriath-jearim the Ark remained until David's victory, in the campaign initiated in 2 Sam. vi. 1, rescued the city from the Philistine power, and with it the Ark of Yahweh (see note on vi. 1, p. 218)[1].

NOTE B. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SAMUEL

THE following are the most important recent works for the study of Samuel, in addition to the standard histories of Ewald, Stade, Kittel (whose work, *The History of the Hebrews* (2 vols.), now translated, is of great value for the study of the sources), Wellhausen, and H. P. Smith, and the elaborate articles on the Books of Samuel by Stade and Stenning in *EBi.* and Hastings' *DB.* respectively.

(*a*) *Commentaries.*

H. P. SMITH. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, 1899.

A. KLOSTERMANN. *Die Bücher Samuelis und Könige*, 1887.

O. THENIUS. *Die Bücher Samuelis erklärt*, 3rd edition by Dr. Max Löhr, 1898 (with a valuable parallel synopsis and criticism of the analysis of the sources).

K. BUDDE. *Die Bücher Samuelis erklärt*, 1902.

W. NOWACK. *Die Bücher Samuelis übersetzt und erklärt*, 1902.

(*b*) *Aids for literary and textual criticism.*

S. R. DRIVER. *The Literature of the Old Testament.*

——*Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel.*

K. BUDDE. *Die Bücher Richter und Samuel.*

—— *The Books of Samuel. A Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text* (in Haupt's *Sacred Books of the Old Testament*).

J. WELLHAUSEN. *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des A. T.*

—— *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis.*

A. KUENEN. *Historisch-kritisch Onderzoek, etc.*

C. H. CORNILL. *Einleitung in das A. T.*

W. H. BENNETT and W. F. ADENEY. *A Biblical Introduction.*

N. PETERS. *Beiträge zur Text- und Literarkritik der Bücher Samuel* (conservative).

(*c*) *To these may be added:*

G. A. SMITH. *Historical Geography of Palestine.*

F. BUHL. *Geographie des alten Palästina.*

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[1] For the probable ultimate fate of the Ark, see Hastings' *DB.* i. 150.

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